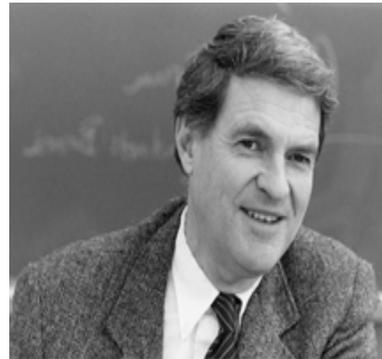


The articles in this issue of *QHE* span a broad range of topics. Guilford College's **Max Carter** leads off by deriving lessons from the lives of 19<sup>th</sup> century Quakers, Mary Mendenhall Hobbs and Allen Jay. **Susan McNaught**, from Kentucky State University, follows with an exploration of developmental education from an ethical - and distinctly Quaker - perspective. Then, Wilmington College's **Douglas Burks** and William Penn University's **Michael Moyer** offer their own takes on working with *unprepared* students. Next, Westtown School's **John McKinstry** provides a thoughtful rationale for students choosing to attend Quaker colleges. Finally, **Lonnie Valentine**, of Earlham School of Religion, shares ways in which *Liberation Pedagogy* might guide our instruction.

**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: [weinholtz@hartford.edu](mailto:weinholtz@hartford.edu). Since *QHE* is not wed to any particular referencing format, you may use the professional style of your choice. If you would like to discuss an idea that you have for an article, my telephone number is: 860-768-4186. In case you want to send a hardcopy, my address is: Donn Weinholtz, *QHE*-Editor, Department of Educational Leadership, University of Hartford, 223 Auerbach Hall, 200 Bloomfield Ave., West Hartford, CT 06117.

## In Memoriam: Theodore Ryland Sizer June 23, 1932-October 21, 2009



Theodore Sizer, the former dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education and founder of the Coalition of Essential Schools, was not a Quaker. But the ten *Common Principles* that he articulated for his school reform network might well serve as queries for all Quaker schools and Quaker colleges. A brilliant and uncommonly decent man, Ted, who gracefully battled cancer over the last few years of his life, remains a guiding light for legions of educators.

### *The Common Principles*

1. Learning to use one's mind well
2. Less is More - depth over coverage
3. Goals apply to all students
4. Personalization
5. Student-as-worker, teacher-as-coach
6. Demonstration of mastery
7. A tone of decency and trust
8. Commitment to the entire school
9. Resources dedicated to teaching and learning
10. Democracy and equity.

(*Ted's New York Times obituary is at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/23/education/23sizer.html?pagewanted=1&r=1&ref=obituaries> )*

## Mary Mendenhall Hobbs and Allen Jay: Lessons for the Abundant Life Today

By Max Carter

*John 10:10 – “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”*

While this verse from John’s gospel is attributed to Jesus, I will be applying it to the lives of two Friends – humble servants of the guy from Nazareth – who committed major portions of their lives to Quaker education and, significant to our location at this FAHE conference, to making sure that Friends in the South would not only be abundant, but live abundantly: Allen Jay (1831-1910) and Mary Mendenhall Hobbs (1852-1930).\*

I have something of an affinity for both. Allen Jay lived for much of his life in my native Indiana; he raised the funds to build Bundy Hall at Earlham, where I labored as a Head Resident for four years (and met my wife, not to mention the fact that our daughter Maia was born while we were in Bundy.) The meetinghouse of West Richmond Friends (incidentally, celebrating its centennial this year), where Jane and I attended and served on the ministry team, is a memorial to Allen Jay; Guilford College might not exist were it not for Jay’s incredible labors directing the work of the Baltimore Assn. to Advise and Assist Friends in the Southern States following the Civil War. Many of us in this room, in fact, owe a

debt of gratitude to Jay. He raised the funds to help transition the Friends School in Carolina to Guilford College in the 1880s. He raised funds for Whittier College and encouraged Pacific College, the forerunner of George Fox University. (Incidentally, while visiting Oregon and Washington in 1906, he “milked” Elbridge Stuart, a descendant of North Carolina Quakers and founder of the Carnation Dairy Company, for the funds to purchase the lot and build and furnish a meetinghouse for Friends in Seattle!)

Jay worked for four years as the treasurer of the Friends school in Providence, R.I. that is now known as the Moses Brown School. When he was called to Earlham in the 1870s to raise money for that struggling institution, there was but one building and the heating plant, both in deplorable condition. Jay reported, in his autobiography, that after touring the campus, he sat on a log behind old Earlham Hall and meditated long about the seemingly hopeless task. That many of us today sit on the Earlham campus and meditate on how on earth our institutions could have the resources our friends in Richmond have - is credit to Jay. He oversaw the creation of the Earlham we know now, raised funds for six new buildings (including the aforementioned Sovereign State of Bundy!), and was a tireless advocate among Friends for the college and its sometimes beleaguered faculty.

For her part, Mary Mendenhall Hobbs was an equal partner with her husband, Lewis Lyndon Hobbs, the first

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\* This article is adapted from the opening plenary session at the June 2009 Friends Association for Higher Education annual meeting held at Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina.

president of Guilford College, in shaping the character of the place. Tom Hamm, Quaker historian at Earlham College, cites her influence in his *The Transformation of American Quakerism* in maintaining the College as a “modernist island in a sea of fundamentalism.” (*Transformation*, p.153) She assured that Guilford, the first coeducational institution in the South, would maintain a lively female presence by forming a committee to raise funds to enable girls to attend the school. In the shattered economy of the South following the war, there was little money available for education, and boys typically were the beneficiaries of what there was. Her labors resulted in the building on campus that bears her name, a cooperative residence hall for women built in 1907. She did not restrict her interest in women’s education to Friends, either. Hobbs is credited with being a major influence in the founding of North Carolina’s first public college for women in the 1890s.

I want more fully to introduce you to these important figures in the life of Friends in the South – indeed, in the life of Quaker education beyond this region – and make some observations about what we might draw from their lives in our own work in higher education. I’ll turn first to Allen Jay.

### ***Allen Jay***

About a two-hours drive north of Greensboro, N.C., in central Virginia, is the city of Lynchburg, known most famously as the home of Jerry Falwell’s Liberty University (recently thrown back into the national spotlight by Kevin Roose, a Quaker student at Brown who has authored a popular book about his “study abroad” experience at Liberty). While at Liberty this spring to deliver an

academic paper, I drove five minutes from campus to see a lovely 18<sup>th</sup> century stone Quaker meetinghouse. Lynchburg was settled by Quakers in the mid-1700s and is named for John and Sarah Lynch, members of the Society. By the 1830s, there wasn’t a Quaker remaining in the area, the community having packed up and left to Free states in the anti-slavery migrations that reduced the membership of Friends in the South from somewhere around 20,000 in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to fewer than 2,000 at the close of the Civil War. The large meetinghouse was abandoned, later to be occupied by Presbyterians, in an exercise of applying their Scottish penuriousness to obtaining cheap accommodations! Ever after, it has been known as the ***Quaker Memorial Presbyterian Church***. To this day, there is but a handful of Quakers in the area.

About 15 minutes drive from Guilford College, in the southern reaches of High Point, N.C. is the Allen Jay Baptist Church, in the community of Allen Jay, across the road from Allen Jay Middle School, home to a lovely stone gymnasium known as the Allen Jay Gym (and profiled, recently, in last Monday’s *Greensboro News & Record*). Within a radius of only a few miles of that Baptist Church are eight flourishing Friends meetings, and the Piedmont of North Carolina is home to one of the largest – if not the largest – concentrations of Friends in North America, more than 11,000 members residing in this section of the state alone.

The striking difference between the fate of Lynchburg and that of this area is the result largely of Allen Jay’s work. But he wasn’t always a “local hero.”

As a little boy in Ohio, Jay played an integral role in his family’s

activities on the Underground Railroad. During the Civil War, having moved to Indiana, he steadfastly maintained his nonviolent commitment, even when Union draft officers threatened to confiscate his animals, crops, and equipment, and large numbers of fellow Hoosier Quakers suited up. (It took the intervention of Abraham Lincoln to stop the public auction of the Jays' possessions, one of many such actions of Lincoln to "spring" Quakers during the war.) As will be described soon, Allen Jay was largely responsible for the shift in post-war Carolina from Quietism to an increasingly Protestant form of worship, but he was raised in the now-lost world of traditional 19<sup>th</sup> century Quietist Quakerism.

Deeply imbued with Gurneyite evangelical Quaker theology, the Friends meetings young Allen Jay attended were still marked by a deep distrust of emotion, of "outrunning the Spirit," of "hireling" ministers, and of formal Bible study (lest it lead to formal worship and a hireling ministry). Describing the customs of that day, he noted that when a recorded elder or minister shared a vocal message in meeting, all others rose, took off their hats, turned their backs to the speaker, and bowed – and he wondered whether such respect accorded vocal ministry might prevent some of the excesses and lack of spiritual depth of more modern messages. (*The Autobiography of Allen Jay*, especially chapters 2 and 13)

Jay makes a particular point about the sacrifices of those recorded as elders and ministers during this period. Much as the Amish still do, leaders were recognized by the community as being selected by God, assumed the spiritual burdens of the community, and "kept their day job," never receiving a penny

for their labors. When Jay's own father was recorded a minister, he took out a loan to support the travels he undertook, eventually visiting all but one yearly meeting in North America, and most of their constituent monthly meetings. When Allen Jay himself was recorded a minister in 1864, he, too, traveled at his own expense and received no compensation for his labors. Again, he wondered in his autobiography whether paid pastors of the "modern" era of Friends fully appreciate the sacrifices and dedication of their forebears.

In 1868, Jay received a letter from Francis T. King, clerk of the Baltimore Association to *advise and assist* Friends in the Southern States, asking him to replace newly named Earlham College president Joseph Moore in directing the Association's work in North Carolina. The Baltimore Assn. was formed during the Civil War to respond to Southern Quaker sufferings and kicked into high gear at war's end to salvage and rebuild the remnant Quaker community in the South. Legend has it that God called the young farmer to this service while Jay was picking corn in Indiana, that he unhitched the horses, left the wagon standing, and headed south. The reality is a bit less romantic. Although a recorded minister in his meeting, Jay felt inadequate to the task; he was born with a hare lip and cleft palate and felt he could not effectively speak before large crowds. He had no experience as a fund raiser; he was just a farmer. Furthermore, he felt the salary offered was not sufficient for his family. (*The Autobiography of Allen Jay*, chapter 17.)

Nonetheless, Jay prayed about it, consulted with his wife, and let King know that if he'd throw in a milk cow to help feed the family, they would go.

King agreed, and Jay spent the next decade helping rebuild the community of Friends in the South through education, agricultural innovation, fund raising, spiritual renewal, and social outreach. Notable achievements included the establishment of a “Model Farm” to teach scientific agricultural practices, *normal* schools to educate teachers, building and improving numerous meetinghouses, and establishing more than 70 schools for Friends and the recently emancipated enslaved Africans.

The spiritual work of the Baltimore Assn. was especially important, and while Jay did not subscribe to the line in James Russell Lowell’s classic hymn *Once to Ev’ry Man and Nation* that “time makes ancient good uncouth,” he did recognize that the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century demanded a new way of doing things. He respected the Quietist tradition in which he was raised, and he admired his parents and others who represented the best of that era, but Jay also acknowledged that times had changed, and new challenges demanded new responses.

For one thing, the mid-1800s saw unprecedented changes in transportation, communication, and education. New roads, the railroad, canals, newspapers, journals, and the telegraph rapidly tore down the “hedges” of isolation built around the largely rural Quaker communities. Quaker schools, academies, and colleges were established – and increasingly admitted non-Friends, further altering the world views of Friends. Growing cooperation with non-Friends in social and religious reform movements eroded the notion of being uniquely God’s “peculiar people.” The world outside the sequestered, sometimes calcified, Quaker

communities was encroaching, and in large part that world was evangelical.

Jay, already in his early adolescence experiencing a conversion under the ministry in his meeting, recognized that even his mother, deeply Christian as she was, could not respond to his obvious spiritual seeking. Her schooling in the tradition prevented her from vocal prayer – even in private – unless called to public ministry, and religion was not a matter readily discussed in the home for fear of too much “creaturely” activity.

When Jay’s father broke with the tradition and instituted family Bible reading and worship, young Allen found it deeply edifying. He noted in his autobiography that a public Friend visiting in the Jay home expressed shock at this display of un-Quakerly “formal worship” but, bowing to hospitality, said “I suppose it will not hurt me to sit and listen to it.” (*The Autobiography of Allen Jay*, p. 26)

Jay later was part of what he claimed was the first spark of the revivals that burned across Midwestern and Southern Quakerism after the Civil War. In the winter of 1859-60 in his Hoosier meeting, he engaged with others in *Bible* School, *Bible* reading, family worship, and prayer at youth social occasions, experiencing vital spiritual growth and energy.

Most famously, after Jay assumed the superintendency in 1868 of the work of the Baltimore Association, he recognized that Quaker youth were heading off to Methodist revivals, receiving the “new birth,” and facing stern rebuke by their traditionalist families and meetings. If they continued to be discouraged among Friends, he reasoned, they would be lost to other denominations, and his work of

rebuilding the Southern Quaker community would be in vain. Jay won their confidence, however, by speaking with parents, elders, and ministers and attending the revivals himself. In return, the young people promised that they would remain with the Friends Church. Subsequently, he convinced Springfield Friends Meeting to hold a series of “general” meetings at their meeting-house, and these specially called meetings for worship and prayer were held for nearly two weeks, adding some 150 to the rolls of the meeting.

Before long, Jay was invited to speak at a series of revival meetings in High Point. He agreed to, but with the understanding that, as with the Springfield “revivals,” he would speak only as the Spirit led and not from notes or suggested topics, he would not lead singing, and he would not introduce an “anxious bench” unless desired by the full community. His ministry was so effective – along with his other work for the Baltimore Association – that at the close of his work with the Baltimore Assn. in N.C., yearly meeting membership was around 8,000.

The “new methods” employed by Jay in reviving the spiritual life of the Quaker community in North Carolina led not only to a dramatic increase in membership and number of meetings, but inexorably to a more programmed form of worship and an emerging pastoral system.

Tom Hamm labels Allen Jay as one of the most important of the “renewal” Friends in the transformation of Quakerism in the latter 1800s, but even Jay admits to being carried away to a certain extent by the fires of revival. “During the revivals of the 1870s in Western Yearly Meeting,” he writes, “evangelists condemned those in

opposition to “new methods.” I was a member then and enjoyed the revivals but now regret those we injured in our zeal to save souls. We pressed our views too fast.” (*The Autobiography of Allen Jay*, p. 119)

Jay’s *Autobiography* is peppered throughout with reflections on the strengths of the old tradition and the excesses of those who swept Quietism away.

“I am often impressed with the fact of how little theology there was mixed with the preaching of those Friends compared with the hair-splitting doctrines of...today. But after 70 years, having seen the results of the ministry of that day, which directed our thoughts to the Spirit of God...comparing it with the dogmatic and superficial teaching of some today, I am ready to say our fathers’ ministry produced men and women of ability and Christian character which I sometimes fear are not produced by the methods of the modern revivalist.” (*The Autobiography of Allen Jay*, p. 24)

As mentioned earlier, Jay helped instigate and enjoyed the revivals that brought such dramatic change to Friends in the 1860s and 70s. However, he was deeply pained by the separations that those changes brought. He admired North Carolina Yearly Meeting patriarch Nathan Hunt for preventing the Orthodox-Hicksite and Wilburite-Gurneyite splits that wracked so many other yearly meetings and lamented the sad story of the separation in the 1840s in Indiana Yearly Meeting that led to an Indiana Yearly Meeting of Anti-slavery Friends, when members of both sides shared the same opposition to slavery. A devout Gurneyite himself, he maintained a friendship with leaders of the Hicksite community in Richmond, Indiana while

working for Earlham – even good-humoredly wrangling a free piano for the College out of the Hicksite-owned Starr Piano Company!

Jay was present in Western Yearly Meeting when evangelists instituted altars of prayer and hymn-singing; they condemned any who opposed these methods for saving souls. When in 1877 leading traditionalist ministers finally admitted defeat and retreated from the sessions of the yearly meeting, a revivalist (Tom Hamm believes it was the visiting holiness preacher David B. Updegraff) called on the remaining Friends to sing a rousing hymn, “See the great host advancing, Satan leading on...,” so the Conservative Friends would have it ringing in their ears as they left the meeting house.

Such a history, Jay believed, was no credit to Friends. He placed blame on both sides and believed “...it is doubtful whether separations are ever beneficial in advancing the kingdom of God...Each needed the gifts of the other. Had they remained together, some of the extreme things that have been done would not have occurred.” (*The Autobiography of Allen Jay*, p.101) Jay held that separations never caused more people to hear the Gospel, never enlarged the Church, and certainly did not show the world the spirit of Christ. “Has a separation ever caused the world to exclaim, ‘Behold how these Christians love one another?’” (*The Autobiography of Allen Jay*, p.117)

Rather than such a spirit of division, Jay believed one should feel a “deep need of living Christ before the people” (*The Autobiography of Allen Jay*, p. 374) and called for leaders among Friends who were free of extreme views, who can see more than one side of a question, and who work for unity

rather than “splitting hairs” and engaging in doctrinal arguments.

### ***Mary Mendenhall Hobbs***

Mary Mendenhall Hobbs lived through the Civil War at New Garden Boarding School, owing to her headmaster father’s decision to remain in the South rather than see the school die. She was educated briefly at the private Quaker Howland School in New York, where she met both the holiness preacher David B. Updegraff and the progressive Hicksite reformer Susan B. Anthony. Later she was a partner with her husband, President Lewis Lyndon Hobbs, in creating a vital Guilford College out of its predecessor, New Garden Boarding School/Friends School in Carolina. Keen to see educational opportunity extended to girls in the economically devastated post-war South, she created, as mentioned before, a system of cooperative housing at the school which enabled young women to work their way towards a degree, and her communication with the State legislature is credited with helping open North Carolina’s first public college for women, now the University of North Carolina - Greensboro. Active in temperance, literary, and peace circles, she was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of North Carolina. (Information gleaned from the *Papers of Mary Mendenhall Hobbs*, Friends Historical Collection, Guilford College)

Hobbs did not spend as much time as Allen Jay steeped in the culture of Quietist Quakerism. Born in 1852, she was barely a teenager when she witnessed the monumental changes the post-Civil War era brought to the South, and she was sent away to the North for her formal education. But still, she describes admiringly the traditionalist

ways of her father, Nereus Mendenhall, who retreated into silent prayer to discern whether it would be God's will for him and his family to leave the leadership of New Garden Boarding School before the Civil War and seek an easier life in Minnesota (God and he decided to stay!). When revivalists and programmed worship won the day among Friends in the post-Civil War South, Nereus finally did go North – to teach at Haverford College, rather than stay and make a fuss.

In an essay “After the Revival,” written in 1923, Mary shared her preference for appealing to conscience rather than emotion and to the “old custom” of visiting Friends who turned people to their Inward Teacher. (MS 223, *MMHobbs Papers*, Friends Historical Collection, Guilford College)

Hobbs also recognized that the silent worship so revered by her parents' generation was not speaking to the youth and, especially as growing numbers joined the Society from outside its cultural circle, to much of the membership of Friends. A confirmed Gurneyite, she promoted study of the Bible and supported a teacher-pastor model of leadership similar to that promoted by Allen Jay. Damon Hickey noted in his study of Friends in the new, post-war South that in 1897 Hobbs chaired a committee sharply critical of traditionalists' opposition to funds for evangelism. (Damon Hickey, *Sojourners No More*, p.123). Hobbs was also the primary author of a 1906 report encouraging a teaching ministry, arguing that Quaker opposition to a “hireling” ministry was particular to its time. (Damon Hickey, *Sojourners No More*, p. 85). She respected those revivalists who displayed a deep, caring spirit and simple devotion.

Although Hobbs supported many of the changes that radically altered the Quaker landscape of the previous generations, she was unwilling to go as far as fundamentalist and revivalist Friends. She was one of the moderate, “renewal” Friends who sought to bring new life into the society, but opposed a more radical break with the past. She recognized the stagnation of traditionalism but felt many were going too far in breaking loose from those moorings; her chosen task was to battle for a progressive understanding of God's revelation of truth, while respecting the best that Quaker tradition had to offer. (Tom Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism*, pp. 115; 153)

Hobbs was especially critical of revivalists and dogmatists who followed a scorched earth policy of burning bridges with the past and condemning all who disagreed with their understanding of truth. In her 1923 essay “After the Revival” she wrote:

“Is it not about time for Friends to seek out some more rational and enduring manner of spreading the truths which we profess...than the outworn and mediaeval methods followed in what are called revivals?” (MS 223, *MMHobbs Papers*, Friends Historical Collection, Guilford College)

She felt that these “rushing revivals” were contrary to the basic principles of Friends and appealed too much to emotion rather than conscience. Continuing in her essay, she expressed her favor of a more “scientific,” developmental approach and stated a preference, especially, for the “old custom” of visiting Friends who continually looked after the welfare of members and who turned people to their Inward Teacher.

Along with Allen Jay, Mary Mendenhall Hobbs called for a more moderate response to the great changes emanating from the revivals. With other similarly-minded Friends, she helped stave off Wesleyan and Conservative separations in North Carolina, and the yearly meeting did not experience a real separation until 1904 – over the Uniform Discipline adopted by Five Years Meeting.

Interestingly, though, one of Hobbs's concerns was the potential for mischief of the *Richmond Declaration of Faith*, a statement coming out of an 1887 conference of Gurneyite yearly meetings. Allen Jay wrote approvingly in his autobiography of the outcome of the conference and expressed deep admiration for the principle author of the document, British Friend J. Bevan Braithwaite. Braithwaite enjoyed Jay's hospitality while in Richmond, wrote the declaration at the same desk where Jay later wrote his book, and gave Jay as a keepsake the pen he used in the writing.

Hobbs was not as effusive. In an essay entitled "Creeds," she says "Before we...endorse a creed, either the *Richmond Declaration* or another, we should seriously and honestly consider two things: 1) historical effects of creeds in the church; 2) why do I want a creed? – to express to the world God's saving power – or compel others to say just what I want them to say in my way....Creeds are the inevitable precursors of inquisition." (MS 223, *MMH Papers*, Friends Historical Collection, Guilford College)

To Hobbs, such assertions as the Richmond Declaration and its later use as a litmus test by many in Five Years Meeting (now Friends United Meeting) was contrary to the spirit of early

Friends. She quoted approvingly from William Penn's *A Key*:

"It is not opinion or speculation or notions of what is true, or assent to, or the subscription of articles or propositions...that makes a man a true believer or a true Christian; but it is a conformity of mind and practice to the will of God...." (MS 223, *MMH Papers*, Friends Historical Collection, Guilford College)

While she admitted that the *Declaration* was never intended as a creed, but as an expression of fundamental principles of the Christian faith, she traced the sorry history in the Church of the "devastations" wrought by creedal assertions and held up as a more positive example the history of collegiality in North Carolina Yearly Meeting without such statements.

A progressive in matters of education and thought, she had "modern" views of the Bible and free inquiry. Regarding the scriptures, she supported "progressive revelation" and the German "higher criticism" in the face of intense Christian opposition. In her papers is this quote from her father, Nereus: "If we meet in the Bible anything that confuses our sense of right and wrong – is less exalted or pure than God's character should be – even after careful thought, don't bow down to it – it doesn't meet the needs of the early and more sacred revelation God has given us in our own spirit and conscience." (MS 223, *MMH Papers*, FHC, Guilford College)

"Don't foreclose inquiry in any direction; Truth is always to be sought after. Scripture is but one variety of authentic tradition – the whole is larger than the part. God is in all history, not merely in Jewish or Christian history....No society or people has the

full, real truth, even Christendom. The spirit of Christianity has not yet fully been apprehended.” (MS 223, *MMH Papers*, FHC, Guilford College)

### **Conclusion**

So, what might we learn from the example of these two Friends? Why are their stories even relevant for a group of educators toiling in the salt mines of a Quaker culture nearly 100 years removed from their experience?

The first lesson I draw from their lives is the importance of the “lost art” of cooperation within the community of Friends. Reading Jay’s autobiography (available, by the way, in a very readable format on-line), I am amazed at the breadth of his impact on so many Quaker educational institutions: secondary schools from N.C. to R.I.; Guilford, Whittier, Earlham, Pacific, even the now-defunct Central College in Nebraska. While serving Earlham in the 1880s, he took leave to come back to N.C. to assist Jos. Moore, also an Earlham College stalwart, in transforming the boarding school into Guilford College. He did the same for other Quaker colleges while maintaining his loyalty to Earlham. His assistance to monthly meetings and yearly meetings here and abroad was also incredible. Sure, most of that was among sympathetic Gurneyite bodies, but he maintained friendly relations with those who didn’t share his own evangelistic passions. He was on good terms with the Hicksites in Richmond, and he “had the back” of Elbert Russell in the Bible Dept. of Earlham, even while others were out to get Russell for his acceptance of the German school of biblical “higher criticism”. He and Mary Mendenhall Hobbs were close friends and fellow workers in the common cause

of strengthening Southern Friends, even if Jay cherished the pen used to write the *Richmond Declaration*, and Hobbs was less prone to idolatry!

While Hobbs didn’t travel as widely as Jay, her correspondence certainly did, and her friendships ranged from M. Carey Thomas of Bryn Mawr, her old classmate at the Howland School, to Traditionalist Friends, to revival preachers. She was “practical, not ideological,” in the opinion of Damon Hickey in *Sojourners No More*, (pp. 123-127.) Her social involvements also ranged widely: she was active in the WCTU (a front for women’s suffrage work as well as temperance!), peace societies, anti-capital punishment work, home missions, orphanages, Indian concerns, the League of Nations, and, of course, education. She recognized the value of Quaker educational institutions in improving the life of the wider society and encouraged a new generation of Allen Jays and Joseph Moores to “go into neighborhoods, speak in meetings, visit families, and promote the general improvement of society,” feeling that it should be the work of the colleges rather than the Yearly Meeting – so as not to appear to be propagandizing. It’s probably worth mentioning here that while Joseph Moore was in charge of the Baltimore Assn.’s work in N.C., he was very effective in such educational endeavors throughout the state. On one occasion, following a public lecture that included such advice as standing brooms up on their handles so as not to ruin the broom straw, a woman in the audience was overheard commenting, “I cain’t hardly believe Moore has a college “edgicaytion;” I could understand everything he said!” (Oral tradition in North Carolina)

In a course I taught in London on Friends in business, industry, and reform, during Guilford's study abroad program in England, I mentioned the contribution of Quaker community to Friends' success in business: not only was there a ready-made customer base, but there were trustworthy suppliers, financial advice and assistance from Quaker bankers, and the "encouragement" of disownment if one went bankrupt! One of the students commented that it's a shame our Quaker educational institutions don't support each other in the same way, aiding in mutual success and strengthening each other. Certainly Friends Council on Education and Friends Association of Higher Education are great steps in that direction, but at the local level, we tend to be discreet entities, looking out for ourselves, in many cases in competition with each other. And we certainly often don't have the time to look beyond our own campuses to engagement in the communities around us.

A second lesson I find in their example is the need for "tenderness" in introducing "new methods" or understandings, of valuing the Tradition, while recognizing the fact that, indeed, it may be time to move on. As educators, we often are privileged to have access to new ideas ahead of others – and have access to captive audiences for those thoughts. Jay and Hobbs have impressed me with their ability to stand firm in their own understandings while typically dealing gently with those whose lights have not yet led them there. And, at the same time, we, too, may have to examine whether the "new methods" that have so inspired us, that were so "cutting edge" in our past experience, have become a "Tradition" that is in need of challenging.

A third lesson I draw from these two figures is what I'll risk calling the need for "Quaker bodhisattvas." I probably don't need to explain the concept much here (or apologize for referring to a Buddhist concept!), but, in brief, a "bodhisattva" is one whose degree of enlightenment would qualify him or her to shuffle off to that Club Med of Nirvana, but who remains on earth out of compassion for others, seeking to lead them into the same experience that so benefited them.

Hobbs's family served in this way for the Southern Quaker community before the war. Her father, Nereus, was Haverford educated, an engineer and teacher, fully capable of going anywhere in the country he might have wanted and prospering. Guilford County, N.C. contemporaries of the Mendenhalls, Samuel Hill and Elbridge Amos Stuart, did just that, migrating first to the Midwest and then to the Northwest and making a boatload of money! Hill, also an engineer, created the Maryhill community and a re-creation of Stonehenge in Washington State, overlooking the Columbia River into the Oregon High Desert, and built the Columbia River Gorge scenic highway. Stuart, as stated earlier, founded the Carnation Company, making far more profit from his "contented cows" than Allen Jay ever squeezed out of his one!

But while the South was emptying of its Quaker population, and Nereus Mendenhall was serving as the boarding school's headmaster, in a dramatic gesture he and the family determined to remain in N.C. rather than leave and see the school close. This meant that they lived through the horrors and leanness of the war years – but the school remained open, because they didn't leave, the young men didn't

march off to war, and Northern Friends funneled aid to the community.

Mary and her husband, progressive, well-educated – either formally (Lewis at Haverford/Mary at the Howland School in NY) or on their own – also could have moved North (as Nereus eventually did). But they remained here, in spite of the hardships and almost unimaginable work load that is evident in Mary’s descriptive correspondence. They saw a deep need to be addressed, and they remained to address it.

Jay, too, could well have remained happily farming in the “High Gap” south of Lafayette, Indiana. He had a nice farm and was in a thriving community of Friends with an excellent academy - Farmers’ Institute, a library and literary society that were the envy of the region, and a vibrant spiritual life. It was the community in which his wife’s family lived – and where they laid to rest in the meeting’s cemetery two small children. But service beckoned, first in North Carolina and later at a variety of struggling Quaker institutions.

Can we learn from these Friends and educators to find ways, ourselves, to live more fully in Quaker educational

community? To be, in our own ways, Quaker bodhisattvas? What would that community look like? What service might take us out of our “comfort zones”? Perhaps Allen Jay and Mary Mendenhall Hobbs can offer hints at what Spirit might lead us into today. The results, I believe, would lead not only to a more abundant life in the Quaker community and in our educational work, but in our own lives.

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## Living in the Light: Ethical Considerations of Developmental Education

By Susan McNaught

Almost anywhere one turns these days in academia, whether in public or private, two- or four-year colleges, there is the discussion of what to do with the under-prepared students flooding in the doors. About 60 percent of entering students in community colleges need one or more developmental courses and the rate is 30 percent for four-year schools (Levin, 2008). *The American Teacher* (2009) reports that over 1.3 million college students are presently enrolled in developmental courses. There is no question that this population is changing the face of post-secondary education. There is another question that we can raise: how do we do developmental education ethically? How do we mind the light in all our students, even the ones who are under-prepared?

Using James Hood's definition, "A matter is considered ethical when it presents us with a genuine dilemma, any outcome of which will produce positives or negatives." (Hood, 2008). Developmental education in higher education is a complex matter and must be approached with the strongest ethical considerations. We need to insure that our institutions are structured in an appropriate manner that has integrity. We want to avoid becoming institutions that are their own worst enemies of their own missions because "they operate on signals from another planet.... It is not enough simply to become a more skilled leader or teacher in an institution that is morally as well as functionally flawed." (Palmer, 2008) We may be dealing with students under-prepared to enter college; our institutions cannot be under-prepared to receive them.

As Friends, we embrace several qualities that can apply to a discussion of developmental education. One of those qualities is that we are called to community. We seek harmony and we seek inclusion—not always easy to combine. In the world of developmental education, this means we recognize that we educators are all in the same boat. We need to get past any finger pointing at secondary schools for not preparing the students. Colleges and universities need to work more closely with middle and secondary schools. High school teachers can help college personnel understand how to work more effectively with young students; college personnel can help high school teachers know what skills are needed for college and together they can work toward a more standard approach. We, as Friends, believe in community -and collaboration between secondary and post-secondary education certainly embraces that understanding. As we work together, we find common ground and support. We are responsible to each other.

Quakers understand that all individuals have "that of God" within them, that each student has the potential for good and is worthy of dignity and respect. This belief leads us to the understanding that developmental education is not a euphemism for remedial education, but a more holistic approach. We embrace a paradigm shift—from remediation with its deficit model to a developmental approach with its emphasis on strengths and potential. (Boylan,1995). From status being a problem to life being a series of choices and processes. (Kozeraki, 2002) We are

not fixing what is wrong, but taking our students where they are and as they are, and finding ways to help them achieve their goals.

Students struggle in college for many reasons beyond academic issues. Graduation rates have more to do with issues of personal autonomy, self-confidence, study skills, and social competence than with how well a student reads or his high school scores in math. Developmental education is a far more sophisticated concept than remedial education; it involves a combination of theoretical approaches drawn from cognitive and developmental psychology. (Chickering, 1993; Erikson, 1997; Kohlberg, 1981). When we insist on the term “developmental”, we are not just substituting one term for another, but insisting on plain speech, acknowledging the scope and complexity of our educational endeavor.

An important ethical issue is that of admissions. While community colleges have open admission, many four-year schools are seeing an increase in the number of developmental students as well. Most schools need developmental students. If they only took students who were totally college-ready, many colleges would have to close their doors. And we would do well to remember that students need developmental courses for many reasons. Some may need developmental courses because they simply did not apply themselves in high school. Some did not expect to have the opportunity to go to college and so did not take the pre-college courses. Boylan (1999) estimates about 30 percent of developmental students fall into this category. Some may be returning students who, because they have been out of school for a while, need a brush up on skills. Some may

have learning disabilities—diagnosed or not. Screening them all out is not necessarily the answer. Being realistic about their needs and the school’s ability to meet those needs is the issue. Friends believe in equality and in toleration, but this does not mean there should be no admissions standards. It does mean that we do not promise what we cannot deliver.

If colleges admit students with developmental needs, they need to be prepared to meet those needs. Some colleges advocate a student’s right to fail. This is wrong: there should never be a right to fail. It is wrong to take a student’s tuition, place him in classes he is not prepared for, and watch as he accumulates debt but no credits. Students also need to know when they are being recruited that they will be taking developmental courses if that is where they place. Students and their families have the right to know and the right to succeed.

Best practices tell us that if students test into developmental courses, they need to be placed in those courses, and that placement needs to be mandatory. (Boylan, 2000; Roueche, 1999) Students who test into, and complete, developmental courses graduate at rates the same or better than those who enter college-ready (Boylan, 2002). And the same mandatory placement criteria should apply to part-time students as well as full-time students. Some colleges have the policy that students taking only one or two classes each semester are exempt from mandatory placement. Many students avoid developmental courses by limiting the number of courses they take each term. It just takes them longer to accumulate the bad grades and debt.

Proper assessment and proper placement means that we also need to eliminate late registration for students needing developmental education. Students who need developmental education are often not as organized as they need to be. When they show up at the last minute, they still need to be properly placed. If all developmental classes are filled, it is wrong to place them in college-level courses because that is all there is. Again, this reflects plain speech - provide the proper classes and have the courage to insist on proper placement.

Advising developmental students is critical. Often, they are first generation - they have no one in the family who has gone through the process and who can help them understand the system. Hirsch (2009) reports that 52 percent of developmental student come from homes where their parents have not gone to college. Developmental students come to college knowing that more education is the path to success, but they do not know how to navigate that path. A core value for Friends is that of authority and truth within - and these students may not understand how to discern their own authority. Most have had very little practice doing so.

Often advisors do little more than schedule and they do not do that very well. What these students need is a relationship with someone who they can trust - someone who sees beyond the courses needed to the whole person. Advising becomes helping students know what prerequisites are required, what courses are offered or not offered every term, what resources are available, how to schedule around work schedules, where the child care centers are, and who can help with transportation.

They need coaching through set backs and role models to inspire. They need someone who will check on their progress and call them into the office to chat about what is going on when the grade or attendance reports suggest a problem. Advising needs to be intense and intrusive. As part of discovering the authority within, developmental students need to learn how to learn, they need introductions to understanding metacognition and self-advocacy.

Institutions must address structural issues. They must focus on teacher performance as well as student performance. They need to address the possibility that the quality of instruction may be a problem. There may be teaching disabilities as well as learning disabilities. There is no excuse for a teacher failing half the class in the name of maintaining unrealistically high standards, or for passing everyone so course evaluations by students are high. Plain speech for administrators means monitoring performance all around and having the courage to have hard conversations - done with kindness, of course - and to follow through.

Institutions need to provide not only the developmental courses, but academic support services as well. Mandatory labs, supplemental instruction, tutoring centers all contribute to student success. (Roueche, 1999) Counseling centers provide emotional support. If institutions only focus on what happens inside the classroom, they miss the opportunity to see the students as whole beings.

Another ethical issue is how many levels of developmental education courses are offered. This is related to both admissions and to advising. How much pre-college work is appropriate to require? Time to degree is an increase-

ingly important consideration and if a college requires many levels of developmental work, that time increases dramatically. Clearly, one size does not fit all. Students cannot be lumped into categories. Some colleges have integrated skills courses which is a pedagogically sound approach. However, if a student places into a higher level of reading than writing, does he go into the lower level or the higher one? Which classes will provide the most appropriate education? Those questions must be addressed.

Developmental students need the very best instructors, but increasingly, they are not getting instruction from full-time instructors - but from adjuncts. When teachers are not employed full time, they are less likely to be available for consultation with students, less likely to be involved in campus activities, and less likely to be involved in professional development. ("Part-time teaching and lower student success", 2008).

And finally, developmental education programs need to be assessed regularly. Decisions need to be data-driven. Levin (2008) calls for more rigorous research in the effectiveness of developmental education, citing methodical flaws in many current evaluations. Far too often, research focuses simply on pass rates and grades. We need to look at programmatic structure, support services, admissions policies, advising practices, and other factors that affect student success. We need to look at institutional effectiveness and resource allocation. Are we structuring our programs in a life-affirming manner? Are our programs non-violent: providing structure, clarity, and classrooms where all feel safe enough to drop defenses?

Doing developmental education as Friends simply means doing developmental education in an ethical manner. We embrace the complexity knowing we, and our institutions, are all works in progress. We insist that our systems and policies support chances for student persistence and success and we work to eliminate those policies that undermine. We exercise inclusion and toleration, embrace community, use plain speech, and mind the light in all our students.

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## Reaching Unprepared Students

By Douglas J. Burks and Mike Moyer

### A College Reality: The Unprepared Student

Higher education in the United States has seen unprecedented increases in participation rates in the last four decades. With this increase in participation the percent of students unprepared to do college work as they enter college has also increased dramatically. Compared to the decades before 1950, more students today see the primary purpose of a bachelor degree as preparation for getting a job and essential for employment. The trend toward an emphasis on job preparation and training over obtaining a liberal education has resulted in greater student diversity at colleges and universities in terms of socioeconomic, educational (greater number of first generation college students), and racial backgrounds with corresponding lower levels of entering students' motivation and commitment to broader learning while in college. It is estimated that  $\frac{2}{3}$  of high school graduates enter a community college or four year college upon graduation in the U.S. and  $\frac{1}{3}$  of those students take at least one remedial education course (mathematics, writing, or reading). Ninety-five percent of students taking remedial courses report that they did all the work that was assigned to them in high school; many of these students have a GPA of 3.0 or higher and report that their high school classes were easy.<sup>2</sup> In 2000, close to 3 billion dollars was spent on remedial courses nationally. In Ohio, public universities spent 23.4 million on remedial courses offering some

260,000 credit hours of remedial courses.<sup>3</sup> In 2007 the U.S. Department of Education reported that the graduation rate (within eight years) for students who had taken one or two remedial courses was one half that of students who took no remedial courses; the graduation rate for students who had taken four or more remedial courses was one third of those who took no remedial courses. Helping unprepared students succeed is a challenge facing all institutions of higher education, not only community colleges.<sup>4</sup>

Shawn Robinson describes three dimensions that describe unprepared students. He classes students as being unprepared academically, emotionally and/or culturally. In looking at academically unprepared students, two areas can be defined. The first academic area is the lack of academic skills such as reading, writing, and quantitative skill along with general knowledge in subject matters. The second academic area of unpreparedness is in readiness skills such as study skills, time management skills, and problem solving skills. In terms of students being emotionally unprepared for college, Robinson describes three attributes. These attributes are confidence in skills (low self-esteem), abuse problems, and lack of motivation and commitment to learn. Motivation and low self-esteem are considered the most significant factors leading to a student's failure and withdrawal from college. In many ways it is also the most difficult

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<sup>2</sup> Greene, J., & Foster, G. (2003, September). Public high school graduation and college readiness rates in the United States (Manhattan Institute, Center for Civic Information, Education Working Paper, No. 3). New York: Manhattan Institute.

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<sup>3</sup> Bettinger, E. P., & Long, T. (2005). Remediation at the community college: Student participation and outcomes. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 129: 17 - 26.

<sup>4</sup> 2008. Diploma to Nowhere. Strong American Schools. Washington, DC. [www.scribd.com/.../Diploma-To-Nowhere-Strong-American-Schools-2008](http://www.scribd.com/.../Diploma-To-Nowhere-Strong-American-Schools-2008) .

challenge in helping and reaching unprepared students. Without students taking ownership of their own education, all of our efforts in addressing other areas of unpreparedness are for naught. The third area that Robinson describes is cultural unpreparedness. Culturally unprepared students typically are first generation students who may come from a family where education is not valued. Such students come from a family culture in which books and magazines are not present in the house and so, as children, were not encouraged to read. Often such students are clueless about what they need to do to succeed in college and don't know the language or what is expected of them.

In looking at attitudes of today's students we find that high school grade inflation leads many to believe they are better students than they actually are. More students today expect education to be entertaining, easy, and fun. They expect good grades with little effort and are unwilling to delay gratification of needs. Students see education as a commodity to be received in exchange for tuition fees and do not expect the effort and hard work actually required to gain knowledge. These attitudes lead to poor long term planning skills and to a lack of self direction in learning. They lead to lack of effort resulting in underdevelopment of cognitive skills and knowledge.<sup>5</sup>

### Experience of FAHE Members and Quaker Institutions

In a survey of "Quaker" institutions and FAHE members in the United States, it is not surprising that most respondents saw the major challenge at their institutions as the growing number of unprepared students they need to serve. Fifty percent of respondents estimated that thirty-percent or more of their incoming

students are not prepared to take some college courses (Figure 1).

### The percent of students at my institution not prepared for some college courses is:

Student Percent	Response Percent	Response Number
0 - 5%	0.0%	0
5 - 10%	0.0%	0
10-20%	22.6%	16
20-30%	26.8%	19
30-40%	26.8%	19
> 40%	23.9%	17
	<i>Total Responses</i>	<b>71</b>

**Figure 1. Estimate of percent of entering students not prepared for some college coursework at institutions at which FAHE members work (data collected in fall of 2008.)**

Ninety-five percent of respondents indicated that students were not prepared to write at a college level. Sixty-four percent of FAHE respondents indicated that students were unprepared to do college level mathematics (Figure 2). It is clear that serving unprepared students at Quaker institutions is a major and important issue.

<sup>5</sup> Shawn Robinson. 1996. Underprepared Students. Eric. [http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini.jsp?\\_nfpb=true&\\_ERICExtSearch\\_SearchValue\\_0=ED433876&ERICExtSearch\\_SearchType\\_0=no&accno=ED433876](http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED433876&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED433876)

**Please check all that apply - Many students at my institution are not adequately prepared to:**

	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
<b>Do quantitative problems</b>	<b>67.1%</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Do mathematics</b>	<b>64.3%</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Write at a college level</b>	<b>95.7%</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Read texts and materials</b>	<b>82.9%</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Critically analyze</b>	<b>85.7%</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Critically think</b>	<b>82.9%</b>	<b>58</b>
	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>70</b>

**Figure 2. Entering students, in the opinion of FAHE members, that are not adequately prepared to undertake tasks a a basic college level (data collected in fall 2008.)**

**Addressing the needs of underprepared students: a Social Justice Issue**

We support the broadening of the diversity and number of students entering college today. In a post-industrial economy a college education becomes a necessity for obtaining a job that enables one to earn a living wage. According to data presented by the College Board:

*“A person who goes to college usually earns more than a person who doesn't. This information is based on the U.S. Census Bureau's 2007 median earnings for full-time workers at least 25 years old. Annual earnings, based on degree, are: high school diploma, \$32,500; associate's degree, \$42,000; bachelor's degree, \$53,000; master's degree, \$63,000; and professional degrees, \$100,000+.”<sup>6</sup>*

Education correlates with wealth and influence. The children of the educated are more likely to value education and become educated. It is a fact that we might not like, but access to higher education is essential for a real possibility of success in the new post-industrial global economy. If the disadvantaged have limited access to higher education, there is a real danger of creating a social divide created and maintained between the educational haves and have-nots. This social divide correlates with race and social economic status. This reality has not changed even with a federal push to improve public education and to “leave no child behind.” Lowell P. Weicker Jr. and Richard D. Kahlenberg reflect this view in a Christian Scientist Monitor article when they state:

*“This fall, American children have returned to schools that are increasingly segregated by economic status. That central reality – that poor children and middle-class children increasingly attend separate schools – is at the heart of America's education problem. Poverty concentrations have a way of defeating even the best education programs. Neither political party, however, has a strong plan of action to address this educational disaster.”<sup>7</sup>*

<sup>6</sup> 2009. Why Go to College. College Board. <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/startin g-points/156.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Weicker Jr., Lowell P and. Kahlenberg, Richard D. 2002. The New Educational Divide. The Christian ScienceMonitor.ScienceMonitor. <http://csmonit-or.com/2002/1009/p09s02-coop.html>.

All children do not have equal access to a quality education. Though unprepared students come from all races and socioeconomic backgrounds, it is clear that a larger portion come from disadvantaged groups. This is why it is a social justice issue that must concern Friends involved in higher education.

**What We Are Doing at Two Quaker Colleges**

At most of our institutions, we have developed remedial courses to help prepare students in the basic academic skills that unprepared students need to be successful. We have also developed courses to develop time management and study skills. We have developed learning centers where students can go for individual and group help. What we have not done is to transform our faculty and “regular” courses to help unprepared students. At William Penn University there is the Academic Skills Building Program in which students who are accepted conditionally are assigned an academic coach the first year. Also, all first year students must take College Foundations, a course utilizing Skip Downing’s text, On Course: Strategies for Creating Success in College and in Life, that focuses on the theme that success is a result of one’s choices, emphasizes “soft skills” and encourages student ownership for one’s performance in college (Figure3).<sup>8</sup>

At Wilmington College of Ohio there are several remedial and college preparedness courses including: Writing, Mathematics, College Vocabulary, Effective College Study Strategies, and Reading for students identified as needing academic skills enrichment. In addition, for students identified as unprepared, there is a course called Academic Resources which gives freshmen a firsthand introduction to every aspect of the college. In this course, basic

academic skills of writing, reading, library use, critical thinking, and basic research are empha-

**On Course: Critical Skills**

<b>Responsibility</b>	Who is in charge of creating my life the way I want it to be?
<b>Motivation</b>	What are my goals and dreams? What outcomes and experiences do I want to create? What is my educational goal? What legacy do I want to leave?
<b>Self-Management</b>	How do I manage my actions effectively to achieve the life that I want? What self-management tools will assist me?
<b>Interdependence</b>	
<b>Self-Awareness</b>	What are my habit patterns? What habits support my success? Which habits sabotage my success? How can I change the habits that sabotage me?
<b>Life-Long Learning</b>	
<b>Emotional Intelligence</b>	How do I experience life fully, yet manage my emotions so that I stay on course to my goals and my dreams?
<b>Self-Esteem</b>	Who am I? What do I value? How can I feel even more confident? What reputation do I have with myself?

**Figure3: Topics Covered in William Penn University course for first year students.**

<sup>8</sup> Downing, Skip. 2007. *On Course: Strategies for Success in College and in Life* (5th ed). Houghton Mifflin. NY, NY.

sized. Career exploration and participation in campus activities are encouraged. Wilmington College also has a program to identify students who are having academic difficulties early in every semester. Faculty members are asked to send notices to the academic dean's office after every course evaluation (such as a test or a paper) is completed listing students who are failing or are having difficulties. The student's advisor is then notified as well as the student; if necessary, the student is asked to set up an appointment with the academic dean. Finally, as does William Penn University, Wilmington College has an Academic Resource Center to help students individually and in groups. We believe that our programs are reflective of programs at most of our Quaker colleges.

### **Unprepared Students in "Content Courses"**

There are several things you can do in your class to help unprepared students. Unprepared students can greatly benefit from a personal relationship with a mentor. You might initiate a mentoring relationship by requiring students to meet in the office or over coffee. You also can help students get to know each other in your classes. Remember that students often are not culturally ready for college and don't understand how the system works. Therefore, set and communicate clear expectations and require attendance and participation. At Wilmington College the best predictor for who will receive a failing grade in a course is attendance. Contact with students who skip class any time during the first few weeks is important. Give both formative and summative assessment early and often. Think about ways you can use formative assessments not only to identify learning needs, but also to help guide learning. On summative assessments provide feedback and think about having students make an office visit to go over test results. A common comment by an unprepared student after a first test is, "I studied all these hours and thought I was prepared, and I failed this test." Keep in mind that unprepared students

have a special need for positive feedback when they do have success.

In our work with first year courses that enroll unprepared students, we have learned that the most important thing is to not lower standards while unprepared students "catch up." It is important to have high expectations. Students have a tendency to respond and to work to set expectations. Unprepared students have the ability to catch up rapidly if they are motivated. Always remember that "unprepared" does not mean incapable. Introduce students to learning styles and have them use this information to discover study strategies that match their learning style. Encourage student ownership and responsibility for learning. One current buzz phrase in higher education is *Learner Centered Instruction*, the core idea of which is that the student takes ownership and responsibility for his or her education, an essential value for the unprepared student who commonly lacks motivation and commitment. Graham Gibbs in an Orientation to College states:

*"Encouragement to 'try harder and do better' by developing better study skills may have limited value without directly addressing student motivation and attitudes toward learning."*<sup>9</sup>

Diego James Navarro has developed a program at Cabrillo College to help unprepared students succeed in a community college setting. In the first semester of his program, students take a four-unit, three week foundations course that at its core addresses motivation; designed, according to Navarro, to "rekindle the fire within for learning."<sup>10</sup> We agree that the **most important thing in working with unprepared students is supporting and rewarding ownership and motivation of a student for their learning.**

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<sup>9</sup> Gibbs, Graham. 2004. "Changing Concepts of Learning." Orientation to College: A Reader. Editors: Elizabeth Steltenpohl, Jane Shipton, and Sharon Villines.

<sup>10</sup> Diego James Navarro. Personal Communication.

## What Can FAHE Do?

What can FAHE do to support and improve education of unprepared students? We envision the possibility of providing online resources that would be centered on a Friends pedagogical orientation in working with unprepared students, collecting materials on best practices and reviews of the literature, and developing an online community that can enable people to interact in discussions and to share insights and questions. Another possibility for exploration could be an online mentoring network for students.

## Concluding Remarks

As we seek to provide higher education to an increasing number of people, we need to accept the challenge of working with unprepared students who have the ability to succeed, but may not be in the position to do so without appropriate intervention and assistance. In our post-industrial society, higher education is considered the minimal certification for entry into the economic market place. As a consequence we find growing numbers of unprepared students taking their place in our classrooms. Given the economic and social ramifications associated with educational attainment, as Quakers we should recognize that education of these unprepared students involves issues of social justice.

In this article we identify the dimensions of the challenge unprepared students pose to higher education in academic, emotional, and cultural terms. We suggest that the most important dimensions are the emotional and cultural--particularly the emotional dimension in that developing commitment and motivation to succeed are critical to a foundation for academic success. We have described what is being done at two of our Quaker institutions of higher learning. Our institutions have made progress in developing and providing resources to meet the academic needs of unprepared students. A need that we have identified is the linkage between the "remedial" curriculum and content

curriculum. Finally, we explore future FAHE plans to address this important need and challenge. We are hoping to begin an online site dedicated to a Quaker pedagogy for educating and helping unprepared students in early spring 2010.

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## The Importance of Quaker Institutions of Higher Learning\*

By John McKinstry

350 years ago, amid the religious and political turmoil of 17<sup>th</sup> century England, George Fox, seeking for answers to the pressing questions of the day, had a vision that God had come to teach his people himself and that there was an inward Teacher which could speak to each person's condition. Out of that vision, grew the Religious Society of Friends, which further accomplished the establishment of one of the most democratic societies - and some of the most enlightened educational institutions - the world has ever known. We are now gathered here in the midst of the turmoil of the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century to ask to what extent those colleges founded upon Fox's vision, can answer the pressing questions of our time and can speak to our condition. I believe very strongly that a Friends higher education is very relevant and urgently needed for it affords the possibility of a fulfilled, purposeful and happy adult life, characterized by continuing revelation, or as we say in education, life-long learning.

My strong interest in Friends education grew out of personal experience. I am a Quaker and feel fortunate to have had seven years of Quaker education: three at Westtown and four at Swarthmore College. My memories of both those schools are very vivid and happy ones. Since we are talking about colleges, I will confine my recollection to Swarthmore. There, I knew all my professors as well as the dean and the president on a first name

basis. Swarthmore values community life and relationships, as shown by among other things its layout, its small size, and its openness to dissenting ideas.<sup>11</sup> I also remember how central humor was to life there, with a great deal of self-deprecation being part of the Swarthmore persona.<sup>12</sup> The dining hall and the dormitories were places of intense and fun conversations, and the school had the perfect balance between the seriousness of our intellectual and social pursuits and the ability to laugh at ourselves. Most importantly, as one would expect of an institution with religious roots, it infused a sense of meaning and integrity to all it taught and instilled and reinforced in its graduates a belief that life should have meaning and high purpose.

Immersed as I was in this culture, I took it for granted, and it never occurred to me that people or schools elsewhere were any different. It was my experience in law school that opened my eyes to another world. With classroom settings that were sometimes humiliating and often disenfranchising, my law school's mission was to produce people with sound legal skills. But it never spoke about a larger duty to make the world a better place or to serve

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<sup>11</sup> Because Swarthmore results in so many marriages, it is often referred as a Quaker matchbox.

<sup>12</sup> For example, Swarthmore had a Marching Society, an impromptu band that would play at the half-time ceremonies of the football games. With a repertoire that include the Blue Danube, they would have unusual half time shows, such as a salute to the Domino Theory where they all lined up and fell over, and educational shows, such as a demonstration of the process of mitosis.

**\* This article is adapted from a keynote address delivered at the Quaker College Fair, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October 23, 2004.**

others; in fact it implied that such thinking might cause you to commit malpractice. While law school very ably taught us to think analytically, and to understand the law, what we learned was never framed in terms of larger truths: our primary duty was to be a zealous advocate for our clients. It did not have in its vocabulary the importance of intentional community building and so there was none. The career planning office openly scoffed at careers in public service, non-profits and academia. My fellow students generally followed the path they were directed by the school, and it was only due to my earlier training that I listened for and heeded the call to service. The sense of integrity was not there either, with the course on professional responsibility being offered as a perfunctory response to Watergate without encouraging any reflection on larger issues of social responsibility. There was none of the fun, humor, imagination, community, conversation or psychological safety I knew from Swarthmore. It was through this experience that I realized what was so important about Friends education.

So, what is a Quaker education? Friends' theology is grounded in the Doctrine of the Inner Light which says that there is that of God in everyone. Various descriptions of God as the light, the indwelling Spirit, the inward Teacher, the Christ within, the Doctrine has important consequences. First, divine Truth is accessible to all and is continually revealed. Friends' education rests directly on this. The root of the word *educate*: means to draw out, and in Quaker schools, we draw out the knowledge that exists within each of us. As David Gansz writes "Quakers refer to the Light as the Teacher Within. The Teacher provides immediate and direct

guidance....Awakening the Teacher Within is the purpose of Quaker education."

Given the beliefs of the Religious Society of Friends and the Friends philosophy of education, exactly how can the Quaker colleges speak to one's condition? Let me begin with the most immediate: how they can affect one's life and education at college.

Even in the colleges that have very remote relations with the Society of Friends, and lack religious language, the schools' origins have effects on the culture which can make significant differences on an undergraduate's life. These effects begin with the admissions process. These colleges describe themselves with language couched in terms of community, trust, service, personal responsibility, tolerance, dignity, respect, personal growth and intellectual engagement. Hence, they attract those who seek these things. Other schools may market themselves to and attract those whose ambitions are not spiritual, intellectual or communal, but who attend college in pursuit primarily of material success and prestige. While Quaker schools may contain such students, overall, there is a self-selection that reinforces the Quaker character of the schools. Hence these undergraduates are predisposed to be like-minded.

The characteristic of these schools which is important is a sense of simplicity, community, trust, integrity and purpose. The simplicity is manifested in social relationships, in dress, and in life styles. At some colleges, the way one lives depends on how much money one has. But at Friends colleges, by and large campus activities are free and open to everyone. The schools trust the students and the

students trust the schools and each other. This trust is manifested for example by the Haverford Honor Code, where students take full responsibility for their conduct and integrity in all academic work, including all homework assignments, papers, and exams. In return, Haverford students are trusted with a greater degree of freedom in their academic pursuits. Self-scheduled, take-home, and/or unproctored exams are a routine part of this experience. These schools are intentional communities and that is shown by how students work with one another. Students share information in a cooperative way, engaged in a common enterprise, as opposed to the intense grade competition in some schools that precludes such cooperation. The sense of community is expressed in the valuing of the whole person and the fact that every person may participate in all the activities, including sports. People are not neatly divided into jocks, artists, and nerds because it is possible for one person to take part in many activities. Community is expressed by a celebration of diversity, a diversity which is pursued because it is morally responsible and educationally sound, not because it is good marketing. These schools lack the Greek system of fraternities, and deliberately de-emphasize materialism and privilege because these run counter to a collegial and egalitarian life.

One's experience also may include an intellectualism and pursuit of justice that give these schools their special flavor. For example, Swarthmore's Honors program is where in your junior and senior year, you take seminars, engage in independent study or do a series of scientific experiments, all of which are very similar to graduate study with a close, collegial,

collaborative relationship with your professors. This course of study in the Honors program leads up to a series of written and oral examinations by those outside the school. It is this intense but highly rewarding intellectual atmosphere that most remember with great appreciation about Swarthmore. There are other examples of how an emphasis of giving to others generates a charitable atmosphere. Earlham's language, curriculum, and social life are fully immersed in the Society of Friends and it is rightly listed as one of the colleges in the country that changes lives, in part because of its commitment to advancing the causes of social justice and equality, and in building the conditions for a more peaceful world. Guilford has a Quaker Leadership Scholars Program and is also listed as a college that transforms lives. George Fox University has programs on peace, and conflict resolution. William Penn University has been recognized for its competencies in compassion, conscience and leadership. I refer to just a few, but all Quaker colleges, while using different language, emphasize the same things: compassion, conscience, leadership, peace-making, personal responsibility, devotion to intellectual and spiritual growth, and service.

Finally, reflecting my own experience, and seeming to follow Fox's admonition to walk cheerfully over the earth seeking that of God in everyone, these schools are places where you can make life-long, fast friendships characterized by humor and care.

I note that there are many non-Quaker colleges that also encourage such things as intellectualism, cooperation and service. However, Friends colleges, anchored as they are by history, tradition or mission in a Quaker

belief system, do all these things by definition.

While these schools can offer a holistic experience at college, it is also important to note how Quaker higher education can speak to the needs of the world. In the first place, Quaker education can help bridge the gap between those of faith and those who seek social progress. This so called “religion gap” is obvious in our politics, where certain wedge issues such as abortion and school prayer have been used to divide those of faith from issues of social progress. As John Podesta, of the Center for American Progress has noted “Today, there is a growing misperception...that those who espouse progressive views are inherently antireligious...[However,] there are historic ties between the religious community and progressives.” Many great movements of positive social change in American history had their roots in religion, particularly Quakerism: the founding of Penn’s Holy Experiment in Pennsylvania, the anti-slavery and civil rights movement, women’s liberation, temperance and prison reform all had their roots in religion. Today, many progressive movements are supported, not only by Quakers and mainstream religions, but by evangelicals whose faith motivates them to make a more just world through abolition of the death penalty, elimination of homelessness and domestic violence, opposition to the war in Iraq, and countering the dehumanizing effects of our materialistic consumer culture. Quaker higher education can help close that rift by providing spaces where a quiet faith and social activism reinforce one another.

Second, Quaker education can also help bridge the gap between faith and

science. While some say that teaching of evolution is contrary to Christianity, Friends have always found that science is part of the search for truth. For this reason, Quakers have been among the leading scientists. In the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, for example, a Quaker had a five times better chance of becoming a member of the Royal Society than a non-Friend. (The Quaker Reader, p. 2). An example of this is George Ellis, a recent recipient of the \$1.4 million Templeton Prize for Progress Toward Research or Discoveries about Spiritual Realities. The Templeton Prize, which is the world’s largest annual monetary prize given to an individual, is meant to honor those who advance spiritual matters and broaden the understanding of the relationship between theology and science. George Ellis, a South African Quaker, at his acceptance of the prize, in language that reflects that Quaker belief that truth comes from science and from within said:

“We are at a stage in human history when, as we gaze with amazement and appreciation at the incredible progress of science in the last century, we can also start to see clearly some of the limits to what science can achieve. The way in which science and religion by and large complement each other is becoming ever clearer, as are the natures of the various points of tension between them, and some possible resolution of those tensions. It is a good time to look at these issues.” Unlike some religious colleges that seem to reject science, and secular schools that do not have the language to discuss the complement of faith and science, Friends colleges are ideally suited to look at the issues Ellis addresses.

Quaker higher education provides its graduates with hope. As George Ellis

has said “In facing our individual and communal lives, we always need faith and hope as well as rationality, and indeed the real issue is how we can best balance them against each other.” He spoke of his country, South Africa, where hope irrationally held out against the assumption that the country would decay into a racial holocaust. “[This holocaust] did not occur,” he said, “because of the transformative actions of those marvelous leaders Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela, confounding the calculus of rationality.” This hope, based on a belief in the divinity of human beings, can counter the fear that is pervading our society. As Vaclav Havel said “Hope is not prognostication. It is an orientation of the spirit, an orientation of the heart.” Our Quaker institutions of higher learning can instill in our graduates this hope that can hold out against a cold rationality, and manipulative fear-mongering of cynical politicians.

Friends higher education can help fill the need in our country for increased civic participation. The culture fostered in Quaker colleges, with the emphasis on personal responsibility, integrity, service and community, provides the language and models for what it means to be an active, engaged and respectful citizen. The great German sociologist, Max Weber observed that as societies become more complex, systems and rules are created to govern them, and more and more decisions are turned over to bureaucracies, experts and lawyers. The consequence, he wrote, is that people feel powerless and alienated. Our Quaker colleges, which emphasize personal engagement in consensual decision-making, in learning, and in activism, are healthy antidotes to this alienation.

While Quaker colleges can meet the needs of the world, they can also bring about a fulfilled, purposeful and happy adult life. The life at these colleges is a template for a life afterward full of meaningful and deep friendships, great conversation, and meaningful careers. Most importantly they can provide a model of simplicity. The language of simplicity is urgently needed in our increasingly cluttered world. It is not surprising that out of one of our colleges should come a book *The Paradox of Choice: Why Less is More*, where the author, Swarthmore professor of psychology Barry Schwartz, argues that the material abundance and plethora of choices the marketplace gives us can leave us feeling less satisfied than when the options were limited. He begins the book describing his attempt to buy a pair of blue jeans. Having not shopped in years, during which time the choice in the styles of jeans exploded, he expected a brief and almost routine excursion to the Gap and ended up with the best pair of jeans ever. He was deeply dissatisfied however with the results because a normally five-minute purchase now took an agonizing day, and his expectations were raised so high that he could never be satisfied the way he had been before when there was just one kind, the regular kind. The book then expands his paradox of too much choice creating unhappiness to many areas of American culture. Typical of our schools, this book is on-point, current, timeless, scholarly and funny. But it also makes sense that it would naturally flow from one of our colleges. The emphasis on simplicity in our Friends institutions can give us a mindset to set standards of what can satisfy our needs, and thus resist the

frazzle of today's cluttered lifestyles. Moreover, the emphasis on simplicity can affect the kind of relationships we have with our friends, family and colleagues.

While it is entirely possible for one to go for four years at a Friends institution of higher learning, and not pick up on any of the ideas I have listed above, I think that that is unlikely. As Paul Lacey has written in *Growing Into Goodness*:

*"Our goals in Quaker education are two-fold: to encourage people to make the world better, to become informed, skilled agents of positive social, political, and educational change, devoted to the fullest possible expression of the particular world image and style of fellowship represented by the Quaker testimonies; and to help our students learn to make their contributions from lives which are spiritually centered, fulfilled, and happy."*

For these reasons, our Friends colleges are some of our greatest gifts to the world.

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## The Challenge of Liberation Pedagogy

*By Lonnie Valentine*

At the University of Central America in San Salvador a rose garden flourishes in memory of eight Catholic educators massacred by the Salvadoran military with US government support. The six Jesuits along with their housekeeper and her daughter died just because they were educators who challenged the systematic oppression occurring in their country and throughout Latin America.<sup>1</sup> For the students from the Earlham School of Religion, a Quaker seminary, who visited El Salvador, the memory of this rose garden has pain, power and beauty. Part of the struggle for students—and me as a teacher—is being confronted with this scene where martyrdom came because of the way these Jesuit educators practiced education. These suffering servants were engaged in teaching and learning based upon a pedagogical method developed in Latin America that they understood to be foundational in educating for liberation.

Though religious institutions often begin at the margins of society and offer alternatives to that society, most of us now work in settings that are established within the larger social and economic order. The challenge from Latin America liberation theology is this: How can we do education that takes account of the oppression around the world, including in our own country? For, to put it bluntly, if we are not marginalized, even persecuted by society, we are doing education for the oppressive

status quo instead of for liberation. This is the challenge that Latin American and other forms of liberation theology make to educational practices in Catholic and other religiously grounded educational institutions.

Here is a summary the constructive recommendations I see from liberation pedagogy for those of us in the United States who are concerned with liberation issues:

**First**, we need to break down the “class” space between students, their teachers and those in our society who are poor and oppressed.

**Second**, from such de-centering experiences with oppression, students, teachers and perhaps the institution itself will raise the self-critical questions about the realities we have seen in contrast to the educational reality we are in.

**Third**, and most problematically, we need to embrace what is called in Latin American liberation theology, “the preferential option for the poor.”

This essay first situates the liberation challenge to our teaching and learning in relation to the U. S. Catholic Bishops’ 1986 statement on “Economic Justice for All.” Then each of the above three recommendations are explored.

## **U.S. Higher Education and the “Economic Justice For All”**

In their 1986 statement on economic justice, the U. S. Catholic Bishops went a long way towards embracing the challenge of Latin American liberation pedagogy, but did not fully explicate what their statement might mean for post-secondary educational institutions, especially religious based institutions. Further, it was not their task to say what implications there are from their statement to specifics of pedagogy. Rather, their challenge was to stimulate all institutions to think about economic issues as they engage in their stated missions. So, this essay seeks to draw out some of those implications for pedagogy and this section seeks to highlight the connections between the U.S. Bishops’ concerns and education in religiously based institutions, generally.

The bishops state that the reason they wrote the pastoral letter on the economy is because of the challenge that the economic system of the U. S. raises questions about how we are “to live our faith in the world.” Their fundamental premise is: “The life and words of Jesus and the teaching of his Church calls us to serve those in need and to work actively for social and economic justice” (U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1986, in O’Brien 572-573). Such a foundational principle can of course be found in other denominations. From this starting point, the bishops present the six basic moral principles that they elaborate. These, also, are not only relevant to Catholic institutions. With each, we can begin to infer what they might mean for educational institutions.

The first basic moral principle is: “*Every economic decision and institution must be judged in light of whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person*” (O’Brien 574). For the bishops, it is the fundamental dignity of all persons that ought to guide economic decisions. Such dignity comes from God and so any

economic system is to be judged by what it does to that dignity. This means that educational institutions must be aware of how they are situated in the economic system and what their role as an economic actor means for the dignity of all persons. Attending to such questions in relation to the various activities of an educational institution is quite revealing. Starting with a school’s Mission Statement, what is stated or implied about how the institution sees itself as an economic agent in the larger society? What is its stated goal for educating the students that attend and how does that purpose relate to the larger economic system in which the school finds itself? So, for example, this question ought to be asked as the school engages in recruiting and admitting students and the criteria for the scholarships it offers. Specifically, what is the institution doing to reach out to those who are the economically marginalized regardless of race and ethnic divisions? Then, what is the institution doing to be aware of its economic and social location in relation to those who have been thus marginalized? Of course, many other questions might arise, but the point is that the bishops’ stated principle can help us think about such questions in relation to our institutions.

The second basic moral principle is: “*Human dignity can be realized and protected only in community*” (O’Brien, 574). This raises the question of how we view our mission in terms of educational practices. If we see it as educating individuals as solitary agents in their life, we might miss the bishops’ challenge to us and not even realize it, since much of our economic system can be said to presuppose individual economic actors. This may be as clear as explicit statements of purpose that say the school wants their graduates to be successful competitors in the economic system, or in more subtle ways indicating

that students and graduates are seen in isolation from one another. For example, this might lead us to raise questions about the reduction of the “liberal arts” education, residential educational institutions and the increase in on-line education insofar as these developments reduce the sense of community and social responsibility.

The third principle is: “*All people have a right to participate in the economic life of society*” (O’Brien 574). Here the foregoing emphasis upon the fundamental commitment to human dignity is connected explicitly to economics. That is, for the bishops, the economic situation of people is directly related to the realization of human dignity. Though certainly they do not equate more wealth with more dignity, they do state that people must “be assured a minimum level of participation in the economy.” Of course, educational institutions can help individuals prepare to participate in the economy, however, this principle ought to lead institutions to self-critically reflect on their status in the economy and how they are working to change the larger system insofar as it is unjust and denies individuals and groups their right participation in the economy of the society. This begins to move towards the challenge of liberation pedagogy to be explored later, and the bishops’ next principle faces that challenge directly.

This next principle is the key to opening up the challenge of Latin American liberation pedagogy for us: “*All members of society have a special obligation to the poor and vulnerable*” (O’Brien 574). They state that “the justice of a society is tested by the treatment of the poor” and they make reference to biblical texts for their warrant, citing, for example, Luke 4:18 where Jesus is presented as reading from the scroll of Isaiah which says: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, therefore he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the

poor.” Upon this basis, the bishops, using a phrase from Latin American liberation theology, state that institutions as well as individuals “are challenged to make a fundamental ‘option for the poor.’” This means we need to assess our institutions as well as our own life styles in terms of their impact upon the poor. For the bishops, “this ‘option for the poor’ does not mean pitting one group against another, but rather, strengthening the whole community by assisting those who are most vulnerable.” Though those “with the greatest needs require the greatest response,” the needs of all are to be addressed (O’Brien 574). Implicit in this statement is a tension between meeting the needs of everyone and the preference for addressing those with the greatest needs. This tension is explored in terms of pedagogical issues later in this essay.

The next basic moral principle that the bishops lift up is that “*human rights are the minimum conditions for life in community.*” They go beyond listing only civil and political rights, citing Pope John XXIII: “all people have a right to life, food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care, education, and employment” (O’Brien 575). This highlights the tension between meeting everyone’s needs, while at the same time giving preference to those most in need. What do we do when some claim that their needs preclude meeting the fundamental economic needs of others? How do we consider the range of needs claimed by all segments of society if we perceive that some are meeting what they claim as needs upon the backs of the marginalized? More pointedly, what is the role of educational institutions in exploring this question and how are such institutions to give preference to those most in need? Whatever the answer that institutions work out for themselves, the final basic moral principle of the bishops

clearly states that this is the task of all social institutions.

The U.S. Bishops' final statement places the responsibility of searching out the aspects of the question of the preferential option and also acting upon the answers to that question: "*Society as a whole, acting through public and private institutions, has the moral responsibility to enhance human dignity and protect human rights*" (O'Brien 575). That is, what educational institutions do is more than a matter of raising the questions. Rather, as an economic actors in a larger society, how they conducts themselves on such questions is to be a matter of moral concern. There can no longer be a claim that educational institutions are neutral about such questions, exactly because they are institutions involved in the economic order of the society. Therefore, not only must they ask what it means for their students to "enhance human dignity and protect human rights," the institution is to ask this question of itself and act upon the answer to this question.

The U. S. Bishops' statement on "Economic Justice for All" is in itself a challenging document for individuals and institutions that are doing education. It is clear that aspects of Latin American liberation theology have entered already into the thinking of U. S. Bishops, specifically the difficult charge that individuals and institutions ought to act with a preferential option for the poor. This is not only vital for academic discussion in our educational institutions. The bishops' statement also means that educational institutions decide how they will be actors, based upon the answers they give to what it means to embrace the "option for the poor."

The next three sections of this essay explore the implications of the bishops' statement for specifics of pedagogical practices that emerge from Latin American liberation theology.

### **Breaking Down the "Class" Space**

Most of the education we do is located in a classroom space within an institutional space set apart from the surrounding society. The first challenge of liberation theology to this way of teaching and learning is to, at least, regularly move beyond this space that insulates us from the issues of the larger society. Further, since most of our institutions have "made it" in this society, we can be blind to the context in which we are doing education. The claim of liberation theology is that educational institutions, like all other social structures, tend to become captive to the prevailing cultural powers. Even as we might critique them, we are in a situation that gives little or no direct challenge to those structures. For many in oppressive situations, when you are attacked, then you know you are onto something important! Certainly, the danger to the students and teachers at the University of Central America was clear and the military government's way of responding was extreme. However, our society and government have more subtle ways of keeping institutions in line, though we are now experiencing a bit more attention regarding, say, international students, than we have had before. For example, institutions of higher education were pressured after September 11, 2001 to turn over lists of international students to the government.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, this first task is to put students, teachers and the institution itself into direct contact with the social problems of our society and the world. Though we could talk about these realities and read books about them within the walls of our institutions, the challenge from the liberation educators is that our common context will tend to leave such realities at the classroom door. Such problems might be interesting to read about, but we need not get our hands

too dirty by being immersed in such situations. I imagine that in many of our institutions, many students participate in volunteer work with local social service agencies and many have the opportunity to study in other countries. Such experiences provide a great basis upon which to build, but are not sufficient themselves. For example, often the volunteer work is done from the perspective of “helping the poor.” Helping them to do what? Helping them survive in an unjust situation? Helping us feel good about ourselves so we can maintain our station in life? Helping take the pressure off of government agencies that should be using taxes from the wealthy to change social structures? These questions are not rhetorical: they need to be asked.<sup>3</sup>

A missing link with the use of volunteer programs and international programs is that the student then returns to the dominant structure of the institution. Hence, it is easy to leave behind, to put in a scrapbook, the experiences they had off campus. I see two things that can help in connecting these experiences with what then goes on in the institution. First, ask the students, including teachers who participate, what troubles them in the settings where they have been. How do such experiences challenge how they see themselves in the larger social context? How do they view their place in society, given the contact with neighborhoods or countries that are different and less privileged? What research questions could they pursue to clarify their experience? That is, do not let the experience get cut off from the return to campus. Second, to help make sure this separation of experience from self-critical reflection does not happen, bring some of those with whom students have been in contact with onto the campus and into the classrooms. Not just as guest lecturers or convocation speakers, but as participants in the classroom dialog. Further, try to make

these visits happen over an extended time, so that they become part of the class and not just an occasional event.

The issue that has been argued about for a long time now, and raised again by the recent Supreme Court decision about the University of Michigan, is how we are to handle making our campuses more diverse in terms of race, ethnicity and class. Of course, most of the discussion has been around African-Americans, but it applies to other groups as well. Further, recent discussion has turned more to the issue of class. Many are raising concern that our institutions are class bound, even if we are able to get under-represented minorities to our campuses without running afoul of the Supreme Court (Sachs B9-10). The desire for such diversity may be argued for in terms of letting those at the margins into the status quo economic order. However, in terms of liberation theology, the question about the justice of that economic order must be raised. If we get a representational number of minorities into the middle and upper economic classes, is that justice? That is, the unexamined assumption is that the intent is to allow the racially and ethnically diverse students and faculty who enter such institutions to full participation in the status quo that has been determined by the larger white, male economic order. Here’s a reflection by bell hooks on how this works, even with good intentions for diversity:

The banking system of education (based upon the assumption that memorizing information and regurgitating it represented gaining knowledge that could be deposited, stored and used at a later date) did not interest me. I wanted to become a critical thinker. Yet that longing was often seen as a threat to authority. Individual white male students who were seen as

“exceptional,” were often allowed to chart their intellectual journeys, but the rest of us (and particularly those from marginal groups) were always expected to conform. Nonconformity on our part was viewed with suspicion, as empty gestures of defiance aimed at masking inferiority or substandard work. In those days, those of us from marginal groups who were allowed to enter prestigious, predominately white colleges were made to feel that we were there not to learn but to prove that we were the equal of whites. We were there to prove this by showing how well we could become clones of our peers. As we constantly confronted biases, an undercurrent of stress diminished our learning experience (hooks 5)

Therefore, from the perspective of liberation educators, even our efforts at racial and ethnic diversity can mask the assumption that the status quo is to remain in place. Even if there were equal distribution of racial and ethnic groups in the economic class structure, this would not mean that the structure is just. The questions about this structure are hard to ask, since many of us in such institutions benefit from such a structure. In Freire’s classic work on such problems, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, he describes the tendency of such successful educational institutions to treat the oppressed as those marginalized from the norm of the good society. Therefore, “the oppressed are regarded as the pathology of the healthy society” in the sense that such people must change their mentality to conform to the society so that they will be successful, too. The problem of course is that the society itself, not those who are oppressed by its structures is unhealthy: “The solution is not to ‘integrate’

(the oppressed) into the structure of oppression, but to transform that structure so that they can become ‘beings for themselves’” (Freire, 60-61).

### **From De-centering to Self-Critical Reflection**

Once the experiences from beyond the walls of the classroom are brought back into the class and institutional space, there remains the problem that the setting of the institution as part of the dominant social order will restrict or eliminate the tough questions that have arisen. As bell hooks notes, even those within such institutions who are not part of the dominant social order have a hard time being recognized as other than those who ought to aspire to “the equal of whites.” If it is this difficult for most in such institutions to even see those among them who are different, then it is far more difficult for texts that do their best to reveal these realities to be comprehended by most students and their teachers. As Paulo Freire indicates, there is a separation between reading the school words of the “closed world” of the academy and reading the reality of the larger facts that shape the lives of most of the population:

The other world, the world of *facts*, the world of *life*, the world in which events are very alive, the world of struggles, the world of discrimination and economic crisis...do not make contact with students in school through the words the school asks students to read. (Freire and Shor 135).

So, even after students have gone into this larger world for their experiential education, as discussed in the prior section of this paper, that is not enough for those concerned with liberation pedagogy. They may have found themselves challenged—if

they have not bracketed the experience as something completely separate from their lives—but then return to the relative safety of the school world where the realities that they briefly experienced are not there or at least are not so visible and can be ignored. What now?

First, courses can attempt to build upon the experience of the de-centering world that has been introduced by applying academic skills for reflection and research. Journaling and research on social problems experienced outside the walls of the classroom can help maintain the connection between the larger world and the college world. Those who are attempting to do liberation pedagogy do not dismiss the world of the academy, though it is immersed in a dominant and often unjust social world. Rather, the abilities unique to the university, the resources of knowledge, critical thinking, analysis of causes, and so on can be applied directly to the questions that emerge from the experience of those who have gone outside the classroom. What can we now learn from the de-centering experience of having been in another world?

Second, encouraging student activism on these issues, both directed towards that larger world, but also towards the university itself can help students practice seeing the larger social system. Of course, there are many student groups on campuses addressing issues of social justice, but often these are rather separate from what goes on in the classroom or in discussions among faculty, administrators and trustees. It is often seen as an extracurricular activity, disconnected from the core mission of the school. Liberation pedagogy would argue that such motivation being expressed by students needs more institutional support. Compare the amount of institutional money put into such student activism compared to, say, the athletic budget.

The institutional problem with student activism is that it often turns its attention to the institution itself. Even at my small institution, there have been a number of issues over the past few years that have made us who work in the place uncomfortable, as we should be. Here are some examples of issues raised at Earlham that reveal the connection of the institution to the larger world: living wage for hourly staff, food service ties to for-profit prisons, endowment investments, sweatshop labor making college apparel, and vendor connections to unjust labor practices or environmental issues. Imagine what these efforts could do in terms of education about the world if they were supported as much as some of the other extracurricular activities. For such efforts to develop as part of the educational mission, they need support so there can be continuity. At least at my institution, the students involved in such issues often become exhausted by the amount of work they attempt with little support, and subsequently get discouraged and quiet. Further, because of this dynamic, the concerns also do not get passed along to new students. Would we run the theater program, the orchestra or sports teams in this fashion?

Now, this recommendation does not mean that what any of the student group says must be agreed with or that only those of certain views are to be allowed to participate. Rather, by involving institutional resources, including faculty support, these groups can begin to explore the questions they raise in a deeper way, as expected in a university. Instead of leaving the students at their initial level of thinking, such institutional support might lead them further into the questions, to see aspects they did not initially recognize. That is, such support would help students connect their concerns to the intellectual resources of our institutions.

As part of this deeper engagement with student activism, encouraging interactions between student groups that might not share views would be important. In whatever ethos students find themselves, they might feel silenced or fearful of raising their questions. This can be true both of “liberal” students in what they perceive as more conservative institutions, as well as “conservative” students in what they perceive to be more liberal institutions. If an institution is not careful, then student voices that are different can be unintentionally suppressed making for a less rich intellectual environment. Creating opportunities for those of differing perspectives to discuss their views and the reasons for them can inspire students to do their homework. As a part of stimulating such dialog, trying to make sure that speakers brought to the institution have a range of perspectives on issues will help foster such exchanges, even though some constituencies might be upset.

In addition to making sure all the various voices on campus have a place to be heard, and are supported in the deepening of their self-reflection, the school needs to encourage more continuous contact between the school and the larger world that is suffering from unjust social and economic structures. After all, though we can say that many of the more “conservative” voices are representing that system, even the “liberal” voices are in large part also part of that system. This means that those who are outside the educational system, living and working in the real world, need to be continually present in the campus atmosphere. This would mean not only increasing guest presenters who bring their life and world into the class, but having such people be a regular part of class discussions. That is, if a class is discussing relations with Islam or immigration from Mexico, then having representatives from those groups

present in the class would help keep it pertinent. This is not to say that whatever such a person says is automatically correct just because he or she is from that group, but it does mean that voices not usually heard will be present. For example, if the many service learning programs developed a speakers bureau of those who are clients as well as workers for the various social service and advocacy groups, then it would be easier for teachers and students to make connections with those on the outside of the “ivory tower.”

### **Preferential Option for the Poor**

This final step in the model of liberation pedagogy explored here closes the circle of praxis. However, it is the most controversial of these recommendations, since it appears to contradict the task of the university to stay open to critical reflection and not take sides in debates. That is, are we not to be neutral or objective and not begin with a bias such as a “preferential option for the poor”? Indeed, the prior stage of this model says that even the voices of those who we might say are in the class of the oppressors need to be heard. However, for a university to take the “preferential option for the poor” simply recognizes that the school stands in a social location always and is never free from its social location. Thus, for such an institution to articulate its stance only makes clear where it stands. This does not mean that all dialogue is closed for those who do not share its stance, but that this is part of the mission of the institution where students are choosing to come.

Such a preference for the poor appears difficult because it is often understood as prejudging the situation and not promoting free academic inquiry. To have already decided to prefer the poor seems to lack objectivity and so bring in prejudgment to any critical reflection on the

situation. However, for the form of liberation pedagogy argued for here, there is an error in both the assumption of objective inquiry and the inference that critical voices must be cut off. First, as often noted these days, the place of objectivity is denied given the social location and social construction of all knowledge. However, this does not mean that we either resort to an unreflective advocacy for the poor or that we retreat to a purported benign relativism. Rather, by subjecting the positions and claims emerging from such a commitment to the poor to critical appraisal, reality is made more understandable and relevant to students. It is as mistaken to allow students who have what we might see as correct positions to go unquestioned as it is for students who have what we might see as incorrect positions to go unquestioned. The task of the university in this respect is not altered by embracing a commitment to the poor. Indeed, by being clear as to the institution's social location and commitments, the better we can reflect critically about this stance. If it is assumed that any educational institution can be unaffected by its social location, then these self-critical questions can remain unasked.

Of course, we might say that we can do this by introducing readings and course assignments that will raise such self-critical questions. This is vital, but from the perspective of liberation theologians, insufficient. Why? Because our social location as an institution and individuals who compose the institution are often hidden, we need to make it more clear to ourselves and our students. The prior recommendations here about going beyond the "class"room space and de-centering ourselves gets at this. In this final recommendation, however, the next step is to commit ourselves to standing in the social location of the poor until we can see things from their perspective. That is, it is to be

more than a merely challenging reading assignment or an immersion experience, but the development of enough empathy to see what we look like to these others who are at the margins. Just as we desire students to be able to clearly understand what an author is saying before reflecting upon a text, so too do we want students and teachers to understand things from the margins. So, there are many practices now in place and many colleges and universities that can be the vehicle for this. However, it is not enough to have direct experience of the marginal world or to read about it or to work with advocacy groups. We need to come to the place of seeing our teaching and learning done with the poor and not just for the poor. It is not a matter of charity, but of transformation. In this sense, the preferential option *for* the poor means we stand *with* the poor, realizing our human dignity together.

This is the place where the educational method of liberation theology may appear to contradict the academic pursuit of truth we cherish. Further, this approach seems to leave unsettled the tension imbedded in the U. S. Catholic Bishops statement between the commitment to the well being of all and the commitment to the poor. Critical analysis would seem to require not accepting an option for the poor, since we appear to begin with a pre-commitment that would determine conclusions already assumed. However, if we believe we can remain neutral in our inquiry, we will fail to really grasp the reality of the poor and merely reinforce the status quo of an unjust economic order. However, the theological basis for taking the option for the poor in education and action in the context of education does not mean we uncritically accept the views of the poor as automatically true. Yes, it does mean we must enter deeply into their situation with a willingness to see things as they do, but this

does not mean we must end up agreeing with how others see things. Ignacio Ellacuria, one of the Jesuits murdered at the University of San Salvador, argued that the task of a Christian university ought to be about changing the unjust world in which it exists in the way appropriate to such social institutions:

The university must carry out this general commitment with the means uniquely at its disposal: we as an intellectual community must analyze causes; use imagination and creativity together to discover remedies; communicate to our constituencies a consciousness that inspires freedom of self-determination; educate professionals with a conscience, who will be immediate instruments of such a transformation; and continually hone an educational institution that is academically excellent and ethically oriented (Ellacuria, 149).

This pedagogical approach assumes that we cannot be objective knowers, free from our social location and so being unchanged by how and what we know. However, it does assume we can still engage and must engage in critical reflection on our empathetic engagement with the poor.

Recently, advocacy for certain positions critical of the status quo by educational institutions has led to calls for educational reform. Education ought to be balanced and fair, objective, and by no means take sides according to these critics. The response from liberation pedagogy is that education is never interest free, never balanced and fair, objective and neutral. Thus, it is exactly the vociferousness of these critics that begins to reveal the hidden assumptions that have been guiding most

educational institutions as embedded within the larger economic order. If nothing would happen but that assumptions about truth, objectivity and neutrality were examined, this would go far in meeting the concerns of liberation pedagogy. As one of the murdered teachers from the University of Central America had said, the university's task as a place for critical reflection is not set aside, more is demanded of such reflection. It is not required that the views of the poor or any marginalized group be accepted as true, but it is demanded that such views be heard. The educational method of liberation theology presents us with a hypothesis to be tested: *If we attempt to live and learn in the world as the poor do, what do we see about their world--and ours?*

In conclusion, the three components that compose the challenge of liberation pedagogy to our religiously based educational institutions form a hermeneutical circle that comes to break open questions about not only the larger economic system, but the place of our institutions and us as individuals within that system. This goes beyond experience and reflection, but poses questions of personal and institutional transformation. Some our institutions have gone some ways along this path, raising critical issues about the system, providing experiential education and service learning opportunities. However, without the final step, the embracing of the preferential option for the poor, these other efforts can become lost in the larger institutional stance in the social order. In raising such questions of ourselves and our institutions, the method of education offered by liberation theology does not determine what the answers will be for all students. Therefore, the university itself must answer and act on them, since the institution is already occupying some stance. Finally, it is a question of empathy for the dignity of

others. Jon Sobrino, one of the targets for death at the University of Central America who escaped, put it this way:

It would ask all universities, and especially those of the First World, to be universal, to see the whole world and not merely their own world, to look at the world from the perspective of the Third World majorities, and not only from the exceptional islands of the First World. And I ask that, in looking at this, their hearts be moved to compassion (Sobrino 172).

For such education, compassion does not mean letting your heart rule your mind, but asking that our minds not forget our hearts.

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**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed account of the murders, see Jon Sobrino, Companions of Jesus: The Jesuit Martyrs of El Salvador Introduction and Part I.

<sup>2</sup> I am proud to say that my institution, Earlham, did not turn over the list of international students and we have had a number of students from Palestine.

<sup>3</sup> See Master's thesis by Elisabeth Beasley, The "I" of the Institution: An American Learns Americanism Abroad (Richmond, IN: Earlham School of Religion, 2007) that raises such questions in the context of Study Abroad programs in Africa.

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