In this edition of Quaker Higher Education, we explore a variety of responses to the theme of "Truth and Inspiration," the focal point of the 40th annual FAHE conference at Swarthmore College and Pendle Hill this past June. Major presentations at the conference focused on the relationship between truth, courage, and risk, as speakers urged us to summon the fortitude to act on truth in order to transform the world. The current volume extends this message by exploring the role of community and insight in our conception of truth and understanding.

David Ross opens the inquiry by identifying necessary steps for nurturing community in Quaker institutions of higher learning. Building upon several essays featured in the Spring 2019 edition of QHE, he stresses the importance of storytelling – intentionally starting conversations with colleagues and students about "organizational heroes," courageous decisions, or examples of individual character in the organizational history of one's college. He implores us to pursue "empathetic engagement" with others, including those we don't know well or those with whom the conversations may be difficult. As Ross sees it, the goal involves using the stories to overcome isolation, promote honest dialogue, and transform the forces of dehumanization that plague contemporary higher education.

Amanda Miracle and Gary Farlow extend this analysis by sharing their unique disciplinary perspectives on the dynamics of truth. Miracle's historical focus on the

Women's Missionary Society of the Friends Church in Emporia, Kansas emphasizes the empowerment of women in a Gurneyite Quaker meeting during the 1890s and early 1900s. She documents the myriad of ways that women assumed the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities as men in the meeting, by setting policy, raising funds, caring for the sick and poor, and maintaining the upkeep of the church itself. Farlow's essay highlights the structure of good argument from the vantage point of formal logic and mathematical theory. He encourages faculty to devote class time for the analysis of rules and standards that relevant academic disciplines employ to determine true or false assertions; he also recommends that faculty model critical evaluations of content and sources in the classroom.

In her essay, Carole Spencer explores truth in the context of Christian spirituality. She asks whether there is a reality beyond our diverse perceptions of truth. She emphasizes the theology of the late Raimon Panikkar, who sought to overcome the imperialistic limitations of "culturally embedded Christology" through an innovative understanding of Trinity that fused *cosmos* (world), *theos* (God), and *andros* (man). She observes that Panikkar and other theologians applied this concept to argue that Truth does not take the form (T or F) but rather emerges from these two variables into a new and deeper form. She concludes that Panikkar's ideas foster a "common meeting ground" for world religions that can serve as

the basis for developing new forms of human consciousness.

Finally, James W. Hood shares three selections from nineteenth century poets William Wordsworth, John Keats, and Emily Dickinson. In various ways, the featured poets address the theme of truth and inspiration. Wordsworth counsels us to "feed this mind of ours in a wise passiveness;" Keats asks us to listen for unheard melodies that "pipe to the spirit;" and Dickenson implores us to allow the Truth to "dazzle gradually."

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FAHE ANNUAL CONFERENCE
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Earlham College and Earlham School of Religion
Richmond, Indiana

Promoting Storytelling in Community on Quaker Campuses

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How do we preserve or strengthen what we admire in the spirit of our Quaker colleges? I've carried this question with me since attending a session at the Friends Association for Higher Education 2019 Conference at Swarthmore and Pendle Hill that combined two overlapping interests. First, Nelson Bingham and Kelly Burk invited discussion emerging from a presentation of how they "approach tending to the spirit of Earlham College (including our struggles and successes)." Then, Doug Bennett introduced his project to address the inherent paradox in Quaker colleges (among other Quaker organizations): Friends have exhibited an "impulse to organization" (creating many that have passed the test of time with enormous vitality in carrying out mission) while remaining deeply suspicious of the constraints institutions place on individual conscience and openness to continuing revelation.

My reflections suggest that the key to preserving and strengthening the spirit of our Quaker colleges is being more intentional about articulating and living out the prophetic vision of that community -- telling the stories to one another about when we felt really good about being a part of the college.

The Community of a Quaker College

I start with the first question Bingham and Burk asked -- What is the nature of the community to which we aspire? -- and begin by claiming that what we want is a truly Quaker college. The answer may seem both presumptuous and Quixotic since none of the schools that are members of FAHE have "religious" tests for admission or hir-

ing, and members of the Religious Society of Friends have been a small minority on most of our campuses for most of their history.

But I see Quakerism as an inherently universalist and aspirational faith. Bennett classifies Quaker schools as "testimonial organizations;" and organization to early Friends meant a "vitally spiritual body held together by spiritual forces freshly operating through each individual without formal creed, ritual or sacramental observance" (Bennett quoting Western Yearly Meeting Faith & Practice, 1986). Hence, a Quaker college manifests testimonies emanating from Spirit operating through the community in confidence that, through relationship with the Divine, all things are possible.

I'm no historian, but I've always understood that when the Valiant Sixty went forth, they weren't trying to create a Quaker religion; rather, they thought of themselves as sharing Good News with fellow seekers prepared to receive it. Central to that Gospel is the recognition that each individual (not just members of some Chosen People) is in relationship with the Divine.

Early Friends felt this reality so strongly that many fully expected all of humanity to embrace it in short order. Challenging engagement with the world substantially diminished the evangelistic impulse, but the Religious Society of Friends remains a universalist faith.

While language and habits of thought foster difference and even conflict among individuals, Quakers aspire (Larrabee) to

answer "that of God" in each person they meet and carry a faith that there is a force in the world that encourages us to live according to Gospel Order (Cronk) and thereby create the Platonic ideal of the Beloved Community (see the introduction to Rediehs). Whether "one sees this as a reflection of Divine presence or whether one stands in awe at the spirit of humanity that lies in each of us" (Bingham), all people can engage in a form of higher education based on deep community.

The sociological term for "answering that of God" in each person is empathy (Bingham). Hence, a Quaker college is well on the road to becoming the Beloved Community if habits of individual behavior and corporate discernment exhibit a high level of empathetic engagement.

The community to which we aspire goes beyond a shared interest in scholarship and fostering the growth of students. The concept is better represented by the German word *gemeinschaft* (Bingham), which Webster's defines as "reciprocal bonds of sentiment and kinship within a common tradition."

Empathetic engagement creates trust and respect. We enter community interactions with an expectation of mutual support, counting on not being betrayed or intentionally injured. As Bingham puts it, "Respect means taking another person seriously as a person, seriously enough to engage in honest dialogue, even when you have hard things to say. Disagreement is not antithetical to respect; rather it can be an expression of respect."

Civility -- "polite, deferential treatment" -- may be a manifestation of respect emanating from empathy. But, so might acceptance of strong expressions of emotion. Whether one sees our empathetic community as a "reflection of Divine presence or whether one stands in awe at the spirit of humanity that lies in each of us" (Bingham) we are enriched -- not threatened -- by tears, harsh words, inarticulate expression or joyful song (Morley).

The truly (ideal) Quaker college would exhibit the traits Quakers expect (hope) to find in their Monthly Meeting -- whether members of the college community use "God talk" or not. We'd like to see our work on campus as vocation or an integral part of a process of discerning vocation -- with the entire community engaged in tender interest in each person's journey. Proposals to change curriculum would be corporately tested and faculty "Released" to pursue this new "Concern" or "Leading." Early Friends viewed "releasing" quite concretely in terms of finding the resources in the community to replace the work set aside by the Friend who follows that leading -- or at least assessing the need to replace that work. How different would faculty discussion of programmatic change be if held under the query: "…what does the Lord lay upon *us* to do, and does he still lay upon us today what he laid upon us yesterday?" (Tucker, emphasis in original)

Obstacles to the Beloved Community in Higher Education

In last spring's issue of *Quaker Higher Education*, Laura Rediehs listed some of the dehumanizing forces facing higher education -- obstacles to preserving the campus community to which we aspire. I'll summarize them here and add a few more, but at the top of my list is the busy-ness of our lives that emerges from a lack of clarity about goals and the resources needed and available for achieving them.

Faculty quite rightly seek excellence in their classes and scholarship, students want to succeed in their course work, and other members of our community are equally committed to their primary roles. But we all too readily add additional commitments -- saying yes, without carefully considering whether we can meet those commitments with integrity. We succumb to the idolatry of pride in the busy-ness of our lives. That busy-ness makes it nearly impossible to respond to unscheduled interactions with others with the empathy required of members of the Beloved Community.

First on Rediehs's list of obstacles is the commodification of education. De facto organizational mission shifts from "preparing students to live life well" to selling families a product. We fall into the trap of lifting preparation for the labor market or entrepreneurial success over traditional educational values and helping students and colleagues respond to their Inner Teacher.

Next comes technological idolatry, where pressures to make education "more efficient" cause us to substitute computer aided information delivery for face-to-face interaction and collective reflection. We give up our ability to control the Internet and social media as research tools and modes of communication and succumb to their tendencies to promote divisiveness and polarization. Too many of our interactions with others occur in empathy deserts.

I see these economic pressures for efficiency through specialization and the ease of technological sorting as facilitating silo-ing on our campuses, where cross-department interactions become less common, and we lose our sense of being part of being united in a single community. We engage through the masks of our roles and lose the sense of common purpose. The less familiar we are

with one another, the harder it is for us to seek Truth together.

The small number of Quakers on our campuses is often cited as an obstacle to implementing the habits of mind and process early Friends used to foster community and corporate discernment. But there is a long-tradition of non-Quakers serving as the strongest advocates for and facilitators of empathetic modes of engagement on our campuses. The bigger challenge is finding ways to welcome newcomers to our campus communities in ways that celebrate their gifts and backgrounds, that support educational and social justice goals, while preserving and enhancing a sense of community for all (Bingham). The very language of "welcoming" risks marginalizing those who are different from those who have been members of our community in the past.

Fear of or discomfort with difference can lead to tolerance rather than empathetic engagement. When mere tolerance substitutes for loving acceptance, then we lose our sense of conflict as a means of achieving greater understanding. Instead, conflict becomes a threat to community comity and organizational mission that must be channeled by rules, policies and procedures.

When members of an organization are defined in terms of their roles and the organization is governed primarily by rules, policies and procedures rather than "spiritual forces freshly operating through each individual," then that organization has fallen into the trap of institutionalization -- perhaps the greatest dehumanizing obstacle to community (both Bingham and Rediehs make this case). We are no longer guided by the spirit of Matthew 18:15-20.

Our Quaker colleges emerged from the closely overlapping, corporately tested lead-

ings or concern of individual Friends. Implementing such leadings requires the organization of substantial resources and many individuals. One may question (as does Tucker) whether such organizations can thrive and evolve without a continual examination and renewal of the founding concern. Friends Association for Higher Education emerged in part from a concern to help Quaker colleges, by affirming their Quaker heritage, continue as Spirit-led communities. It emerged out of a concern that historically Quaker colleges were becoming institutions relying on the delineation of roles, policies, and procedures to sustain vaguely understood mission in the place of "living, breathing humans responding to the realities unfolding in real life around them" (Rediehs). Or as Bingham puts it, "Every time we (for seemingly good institutional reasons) impose a new policy or procedure that formalizes restrictions on our individual behaviors, we experience a correlated reduction in our sense of community."

Toward Nurturing Community on our Campuses

In the face of these dehumanizing obstacles, preserving and strengthening community on our campuses requires intentional reliance on the universal values early Friends articulated. Bingham and Burk ask, "If teaching faculty, administrators and staff are all educators, how do we encourage Quaker values to be internalized by the entire campus community?" Fortunately, the statement of mission or guiding principles for each of our Quaker colleges continues to reflect those testimonies and values, even though founding Friends might trip over some of the language and each campus is different than it was decades ago. My view is that we need to do all we can to take mission seriously. By engaging with the values that inform mission, we open ourselves to

the divine source -- the sense of rightness -- of those values and the power to transform.

In his plenary address at the 1995 FAHE Conference, Michael Sheeran described his experiences working with communities that wanted to redefine or rededicate themselves to mission. He would meet in small group sessions with individuals, many of whom entered rolling their eyes at the prospect of an abstract discussion of "mission." But he wouldn't start with the existing mission statement or with brainstorming language that ought to be in such a statement.

Instead, he would ask them to explain their organization to an outsider. Who are your organizational heroes? Who do you remember as embodying the best of this community? Tell a story about a time when everyone pulled together to overcome some crisis or solve some problem. When did you last feel really good about being a part of this community? That's mission -- that's Spirit -- in action. One person's story would bring smiles of recollection to others and prompt more stories until there would be a room full of people with a sense of the community they want to be.

The goal is to foster habits of mind that bring conduct in-line with the behavior of the people we want to be and encourage engagement in ways we want our community to exhibit. Time devoted to this sort of storytelling -- whether as part of an individual reflection, conversation over coffee, or at the beginning of a class or committee meeting -- raises the likelihood that decision making, conflict resolution, and our collective search for truth remain values-based.

Making the stories as concrete as possible moves us past the conundrum that few members of our college communities are of

the same religious denomination, hence, are unlikely to share the same religious vocabulary. But most Friends believe that actions speak louder than words -- that "modeling God's presence in our lives is more important than espousing beliefs" (Larrabee). So, we share stories that make concrete the kernels that underlie all faithful spiritual journeys; that allow others to substitute their own language when I say I want to live in a community that encourages me to "love God with all my heart and all my soul and all my mind," to "respond to that of God in others," and to "relate to others as I would have them relate to me."

We share stories that remind us of the benefits of relying on practices that have sustained our communities. Many of these are practices developed by early Friends (Bennett):

- We don't have to call it "gathered worship" to remind one another that we come together in a search for collective discernment, not winning the day for some point of view.
- Clerking — the chair of a meeting is focused on the quality of process, not on shepherding the group to some outcome.
- Silence/stillness — pausing to process what has been said before accepting new perspectives
- Threshing sessions — bringing the complexity of an issue out into the open without the pressure of having to find a solution or reach a decision
- Listening — the value of truly understanding the perspective of others
- Minuting — the value of summarizing what has been agreed, identifying who will carry out the next action, and naming the resources released to make this possible

- Advices and queries — returning to suggestions, examples and prompts that have proven helpful in the past at keeping mission and ethos at the center of the discernment process
- Clearness committees — shifting the focus from external approval to verifying the existence of a leading

My answer to the Bingham and Burk query -- how do I (as an educator) encourage Quaker values to be internalized by the entire campus community? -- is to rededicate myself to making more time for engaging in and celebrating empathetic engagement: To reaching out to newcomers to share my stories; to explain why my classroom or committee meeting is a bit different from ones in other organizations; to explaining why I am asking for a pause for silence in a meeting; to seek out opportunities with like-minded colleagues to tell stories about practices that have served us well in the past and to use them today; to dwell on times when we have transcended the obstacles to the existence of the Beloved Community on our campus.

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Founding Mothers, Daughters of Light: Women of the Emporia First Friends Church 1896-1922

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Introduction: A Quaker Church History

Initially, the Friends church of Emporia, Kansas was just a handful of Quakers who came to Kansas to help ensure Kansas entered the Union as a free state during the struggle over Bleeding Kansas. The First Friends Church of Emporia became an indulged meeting on Christmas Eve 1863, right in the midst of the Civil War. By 1876 there were roughly 300 people counted as members in Lyon County. The community also served to house several Exoduster families between 1878 and 1880. In 1888 the First Friends church became established as a monthly meeting. By 1897, when the women's meeting was in its infancy, there were 414 members. Since they were packed in like sardines, the furnace wasn't put in until the last of 1900.[1]

In 1896 a handful of women met in the home of Paulina Paddock and organized themselves into the Women's Missionary Society with the creation of a constitution and bylaws. This research investigates their story. First, the essay places the group's creation in context of time and place. Then, it attempts to answer who the women were, what they did, how they financed their endeavors, and their position within the church in effort to understand their place in the church. The evidence suggests that these women inherited a powerful legacy of activ-

ism and a belief in the equality of the believer that ignited their activities within the church. Rather than relying on men to make policy decisions and then inform the women of the limits of their participation, the women themselves were policy makers and directed the affairs of the church, writ broadly. Not just relegated to the concerns of women and children, the women had a hand in everything from the physical structure to spiritual concerns. Indeed, they were the lifeblood of the church. Their work was two-pronged: they needed to work to earn money, so that money could enable them to undertake their real work of spiritual, social, and physical betterment.

Beliefs and Leadership

The nascent Emporia Friends community fit socially and theologically within the Gurneyite branch of Quakerism. According to Pink Dandelion, "Evangelical Friends such as Gurney began to see Quakerism as part of the true Christian church, rather than the sole true Church…Gureny's position was less dogmatic than that of the early Friends because he agreed with other Christians on where they were in relation to the endtime and only disagree on how they had been instructed to wait."[2] With its dual focus on scripture and the spirit to give truth to the believer, this provided the Emporia Friends community the basis on which to claim equality of the believer in a meaningful way. As this work will show, women and children believed, and in that belief acted accordingly, that if God was to work in them why should they not have the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities as men?

And, the church leaned heavily toward the Revival Quaker camp. The Emporia Friends were deeply concerned about con-

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[1] Lillian Perry's "History of First Friends Church," n.d, typescript, Emporia First Friends Church, Emporia Kansas. Lillian Perry's "History of First Friends Church," 3-10.

[2] Pink Dandelion, *The Quakers: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 95.

verting souls to Christ in the larger Emporia community. Historian Pink Dandelion further explains that Revival Friends made widespread use of revivals and witnessed tremendous growth. The church in Emporia was no different, it too witnessed tremendous growth during this time of revivals. By 1897 there were 414 members.

Quakerism, at the time the nascent community began, regardless of branch, espoused certain cultural norms that outsiders generally recognized as distinctly "Quaker" such as a stance against slavery. In the United States, Quakers in general through the nineteenth-century became more "world-accepting, abandoned the peculiaries (sic), and increasingly worked with non-Quakers on social justice projects."[3] As they worked more with other Christians and became involved in ecumenism, they began to lose their commitment to distinctive attire. Thus, the church in Emporia in 1900 might have seen a mix of both traditional plain dress as well as more fancy attire—especially among the newly converted and those working alongside other female Christians in such endeavors such as working for prohibition.

The first Quaker pastor began work in 1875, which places Emporia right at the forefront of this innovation as its first pastor (albeit unpaid) was Mary Rogers, in 1878. However, between 1878 and 1935 there were only two paid female pastors (Rogers makes three total), suggesting that perhaps the more mainstream American culture that prioritized male leadership had crept into the Friends church. While pastors were not considered spiritual superiors to congregants, as all were still spiritually equal, they were the ones directing worship. Hence, ostensibly, the church was being directed by men in its formal leadership.

Moreover, not just in the pastor was an implicit message of male leadership being communicated, but in the physical layout of the service itself. The official teaching was delivered by men and the symbolic importance of a raised platform with men presiding reinforced this idea male authority. Thus, the changes occurring in Emporia were mirrored throughout American Quakerism.

Who were the Women of the Home Missionary Society?

The women of the Emporia Friends church were daughters and wives of merchants, shopkeepers, grocers, professors, bankers and innovators, among other endeavors.[4] They were also products of their middle-class sensibility just as much as they were of their make-do frontier experience. They had money and time to donate to society endeavors. Thus, these were women from families who were financially stable and did not require additional monetary income. These were not women of grand homes; they lived in comfortable moderate houses. Most could pay the annual $.50 Home Missionary Society dues and/or the annual $1.00 dues for membership to the Foreign Mission Society without hardship, if they wanted to belong to both—though the majority only belonged to the Home Missionary Society.

Between 1898 and 1907 the Home Missionary Society witnessed steady growth and focused their organization around a stated purpose. In 1898 twelve women comprised the Home Missionary Society. By December of 1907 the Home Missionary society

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[3] Dandelion, *The Quakers*, 96.

[4] All references are to the Emporia Home and Foreign Missionary Societies Records, First Friends Records 14, 15, and 24, handwritten, First Friends Church, Emporia, Kansas. For more information, please contact the author.

increased to twenty members. In November of 1898 the women met for the special purpose of writing a new Constitution and by-laws, having accidentally misplaced the original made in December of 1896 they remade them in November in 1898 at a special meeting.

In seven articles of their Constitution they established the charter for the group. They named themselves "the Home and Foreign Missionary Society of Emporia monthly meeting of Friends." It stated their purpose as "to assist in improving the spiritual, social and material condition of those around us. One way to do that was through the collection of dues. However, they did not want financial difficulty to be a limiting factor. In 1898, while still a fledgling organization they made a motion "to cancel all back indebtedness of dues." Thus, they tried to strike a reasonable balance between activist and exclusionary policy. They did not limit or guarantee participation to anyone—even when the pastor was occasionally a woman, even she had to affirm the mission and pay her dues and the pastor had no more, or less, involvement than anyone else. In this, they answered the question of who they were: they were entirely democratic, egalitarian, and interested in servicing the spiritual, social and material condition of those around them.

Article 3 is perhaps the most surprising of their bylaws as it nods to the fact that from the very begining they understood they would need to work for money to be able to do greater work. It states, "all money received for work shall be paid to the Home Missionary Society." Albeit of a philanthropic nature, this was a job and required a deep investment of time. These rules answered the question of what the members of the society would do: they would go to work.

From the very beginning, the first entry attests to what they considered their initial mission to be: to hold mothers meetings, to look after the needs of the poor, to secure work, to look after the children who are not in Sunday school, to make strangers feel welcome, and to aid in the missionary work abroad. However, from this rather thrifty entry, the way they sought to fulfill this mission took them in a myriad of different directions.

Flowers were an important part of the Friends' women ministry. Among other things the women used them to honor the dead and they brought beauty to those who were dealing with illness. But it also connected the women to those they sought to serve. When visited the sick it reminded to all those who saw them of the presence of the women and their shared Truth. In some years the women spent more than a member's yearly dues for Home Work, suggesting they valued flowers a lot.

The Women's meeting functioned as a form of early social workers. The panic of 1893 lasted nationally until 1897 but rural America took a much longer time to recover and some historians argue that it never fully recovered in this period. Farmers, for example, continued to struggle long into the twentieth century. So as the Friends Women began to grow and take shape, it did so in a time where families at the bottom were really struggling. And to this the women responded.

From its inception, the Women's Home Mission Society was keenly interested in the sick. Visits seem to follow a boom and bust pattern consistent with modern notions of cold and flu season. Women increasingly functioned as ministers of Truth. They moved in and out of a lot of peoples' homes—literally trying to meet people

where they were. In a period before live broadcasts and other means of alternate attendance, these women united the church body that could not get into the physical structure of the building. In short: they brought the church to the people. In eight years, the women made at least 396 visits between October and June.

Initially, the records fail to indicate what or how much they gave away to the poor. Then in 1906 the women record that they donated in over nine distributions. As they continued serving the poor and giving away clothing, they also note that they gave sheets for bandages, four glasses of jelly and a can of fruit. By 1908 the women consistently distributed 18 bundles every year.

Another way the women helped support poor relief was in hiring people to care for the church. The women oversaw the regular cleaning and upkeep of the church. They also formed committees to determine whom to ask and directly paid the women they hired. This kind of empowerment is commensurate with being in-charge of their own finances. It was also a way for them to support families that may have fallen on hard times. Moreover, the women were generous with their money and espoused a real effort at fairness, in their desire to equitably pay people for work done for them. For example, the women voted to pay the janitor "fifty cents for fire made at last two meetings". He did extra work for them; they should pay him. It was as simple as that.

The women spent considerable money and energies on caring for the physical structure of the church. Between 1-6-1897 and 7-6-1910, the women discussed cleaning seventeen times. The women's actions suggest they believed it their right and their responsibility to invest in the church and to maintain that investment. By January 1999

their fundraising complete, the women spent $112.04 for the cost of the carpet as well as advertising for their suppers and new oil cloth for the vestibule because, to spend money they had to make money. And, once they decided to spend the money, they were decided in protecting the investment. To buy new carpet without purchasing something for people to wipe their feet on would have been foolhardy. Rather than spend, "just enough" to get by, they spent money on the immediate need and then more on attending to the problem that created the need.

Once the women cut their teeth on fundraising for the carpet, they assumed greater responsibility for practical concerns. They bought coal for the church and decided to help purchase a furnace, as previously the church was heated by two stoves. In September of 1900 the women paid $7.70 toward the furnace. But that still was not enough to erase the balance of the debt. So, the women mobilized a fundraising effort and went to work. They held a Thanksgiving dinner at which, after paying all associated expenses, they earned $38.05 which they applied to the furnace. And, according to Perry the "furnace was put in the last of 1900."[5]

Time and again the women cared for the physical structure of the church akin to how they might have cared for their own homes. Once the church was electrified, it was the women who reach into their own finances and took care of the utilities. They paid the light bill as a matter of course, without great fanfare.

By 1910 the men in the church deferred to the women on practical matters concerning the church. The men discussed the idea

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[5] Lillian Perry's "History of First Friends Church," 10.

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of painting the church basement among themselves and, once they were in agreement, came before the women and offered to pain the church—if the women would pay for it, highlighting both the importance of the women's judgement as well as their treasury holding. It also suggests that the men ought not to spend the women's money without their consent. The women were agents of authority, having gained that right by the power of their pocketbooks and the truth of their theology, which espoused the equality of the believer. The women looked into the matter and decided instead, not to paint, but to paper the walls in the basement. And, while they were at it, they decided to paint the rest of the church and hire a man to paper the ceiling. One month later the women decided to also paint the vestibule as well as purchase four mats for the basement floor.

They also routinely give money away to the church at large. After every fundraising sale they ordered the treasurer to transfer in $10.00 to the church treasury. They also supported the Yearly Meeting as they felt led. And, in 1898 they sought to bless the attenders of the west-side mission and decided to give away boxes of lunches to celebrate Thanksgiving. They believed God would bless their endeavors. So rather than hoard the extra away, they actively looked for other ministries to support.

That is not to say, however, that they always said "yes" to every chance to offer financial or material assistance. At times they said no. Rather than send the boys at an Alaska mission pants, in January of 1898 the women decided to personally pay $.10 each to be able to tackle "the indebtedness of our mission in Alaska." This entry is particularly significant because of the discussion to which it hints. Initially, the secretary wrote that their purpose in sending

money was "to defray the expense," but then crossed it out. Rather than just underwriting the mission, the women were intentional about doing something more. They wanted to first erase the debt in order to stabilize the mission's finances. We witness this same pattern in their actions within the church in Emporia.

Where did the money come from?

The women made items on a contractual basis. Area women commissioned the Friends women to make things and the society women either bought or donated the materials. Another very important fundraiser was making and finish quilts for other women. Between November 1896 and August 1908, they discussed quilting 43 times. Sometimes a woman would piece a quilt together for a fundraiser, as Grandma Stanton did in order to raise money for missions, and the society finished it. In other times a woman hired the society to finish her project for her. When not so commissioned, the women sold finished quilts of their own design. Though the women accepted varying amounts in exchange for their work, quilting a quilt earned $1.75 in 1902. Binding one earned $.50.[1] A completed quilt might earn $4.50.

Another regular fundraiser was something they called an "Exchange" which was akin to a craft sale. The first was held at H.A. Rich's grocery store in March of 1898 and was a major production as multiple women covered three shifts: morning, afternoon, and evening. The women sold sunbonnets, aprons, clothespin bags and dustrag holders. In April of 1898 they decided to hold regular exchanges on the third Saturday of every month. The regular profitability of these endeavors gave the women confidence to pledge large sums towards

projects, having agreed to hold future exchanges to make good on their promises. For example, they pledged $15.00 with the Christian Endeavor group towards buying a new organ for the church. They made this pledge in April. In May they had paid 10.00 towards their pledge. After their June sale they gave one half $3.17 to the Christian Endeavor in partial fulfillment of their promise. And, presumably by the end of their September, the regularity and dependability of their sales allowed them to completely fulfill their pledge.

The women were realistic and practical in their endeavors. They understood the problem of being over-extended, which led them to focus their energies on one major event a month. They also understood the need for laborers—which led them to postpone exchanges when "so many were away." Exchanges were also postponed if it was perceived to be too cold, which would have resulted in few customers, among other realities. In addition to making quilts and holding craft sales, the women advertised in the gazette their willingness to do commissioned work, not just inform people of upcoming sales or finished projects. And, the women participated in food-based fundraising efforts, such as hosting an oyster dinner, for special projects as well. In 1899 they decided to have a Thanksgiving dinner fundraiser which allowed them to successfully pay-off the furnace.

The women then turned their attention to annual teas as fundraisers. By February of 1910, they decided to marry the social aspect of the tea with the fundraising efforts of their work. And, they put those teacups to use with their quarterly missionary teas. These teas proved immensely successful as the women wrote in June that the last annual tea raised "$3.66 and all had a good time".

The women also had special collections to aid in their fundraising efforts. When, for example, they shared a Thanksgiving service with the Congregational church, they split the money that was collected noting that it was to be used for charitable purposes. Also, January 1910 witnessed the first mention of birthday money, though referenced as a "birthday box" into which one could place special monies to be used for special projects. In this instance the women sought new carpet for the church. In another instance in which they perceived the state of the Mission in Alaska to be dire, the women decided to read the report "before Sunday morning services and make an urgent call for financial aid for the mission." The women also accepted the Sunday School collection for Foreign missions. For example, the monthly total for July 1901 was $0.77. Though this may seem smaller by comparison, it was a steady, regular source financial support.

One final way the women occasionally garnered financial support was through lectures. For example, they advertised a visiting missionary from Alaska in the Gazette, such as Mrs. Reploguh. At the address they collected $7.25. This address did not specify the amount garnered from the event. But the end of year total notes they successfully collected $7.25 for her. In June of 1907 the women reported having paid $10.00 as honorarium for an address on Japan, after which the ladies collected $4.32 in givings and offerings. In the same month they recorded another lecture for charitable purposes costing $15.00. This may not have been a fundraising effort in the same way they sought to pay for the furnace or carpet, but it was a way in which the women saw themselves as vehicles for aiding in the ministry efforts of others. They paid some money to bring a lecturer, in order to support that person's efforts, and then took a collection in order to

allow the rest of the listener to join in the work as well.

Conclusions:

With the tremendous amount of money going in and coming out of their treasury, the women were keenly aware they needed to be fiscally responsible. The treasurer and secretary jointly made sure to give a monthly accounting of their finances. And, every October the Treasurer gave a yearly report. Transparency was key. Failure to keep accurate records and to keep faith could compromise the purpose of their three-part work -- to assist in the spiritual, social and material condition of those around us." Without trust there is no giving. Without giving there is no work. And, as they stated in 1907 the importance of this work was to do it "for the Savior." All of these little things mattered; all the time.

Moreover, the women knew their energies were finite. This was not a huge group heading an army. The church may have been 400 members strong, but there were only 20 women in the group by 1907. And, they began with far less—and even after the turn of the century only had 4 or 5 at a meeting. Occasionally, in times of bad weather and sickness, they failed to even have enough to call a quorum. Thus, they had to be judicious in what activities they chose to pursue. Yet as the records attest, they said yes far more often than no. And, again, their conduct speaks to the belief that what they were able to accomplish mattered, to them, more in the strength of their God, than in the strength of their numbers.

Lastly, women of the Emporia Friends Women Missionary Society were industrious and hard-working. Their contemporaries certainly recognized them as such. In January of 1905 the women of the Christian church sent an invitation to the society and asked to meet with the women. They were specifically asking for an address on "Women Missionary Organizations." Thus in 1905 the society even functioned as a model for other female Christian societies in Emporia.

15

On Teaching 'True' and 'False' in Argumentation

Gary C. Farlow

We typically assume that simple statements are either True or False. In determining whether assertions such as 'The sky is blue' or 'The Sun is shining' are True or False, we assume a common understanding of terms (definitions) and context. What is often not clear to us explicitly is that we also assume some rule for making this determination. For example, in science there are elaborate rules of observation that one must utilize; likewise, in the field of history there are standards of documentary evidence that are utilized. Statements of this type, together with a common understanding of terms, context, rules, and standards used to determine whether statements are True or False, are said to satisfy the law of the excluded middle.

Less obvious, but nevertheless in evidence in practical life, are statements involving matters of judgment, notwithstanding the existence of rules of determination and definition. For example, the assertion 'Victoria is a good student' is a statement that different persons may judge in various ways, even when the concept of "good" has been agreed upon. These statements are vexations to the spirit and are also the substance of religion and intellectual inquiry. But one might ask, "Are there not sets of statements whose rule renders all of them either True or False?" Alas, meta-mathematics guarantees us, by way of a lemma to Goedel's Theorem, that there are many statements under any rule of determination that are undecidable and thus matters of judgment; and it even tells us how to find them. These statements are in the awkward position of having to be asserted to

be True or asserted to be False, and they must be asserted to be one or the other in order to become part of the law of the excluded middle. Thus, their assertion makes them part of a new rule of determination. The most famous of these 'judgment' statements in mathematics is that 'there is only one line parallel to a given line through an external point'. Other assertions involving the number of parallel lines have proven a rich source of mathematics.

We now consider statements of argument. These are combinations of statements that satisfy the law of the excluded middle, i.e. they can be said to be either True or False by some rule. The simplest combinations are "And" and "Or" combinations. The validity of these arguments is determined by the various combinations of original statements (A and B) and whether the resulting operations are True or False. It is convenient to represent these by tables showing the possible combinations of the original statements' True or False character, and the resulting True or False character of the argument, as shown in the following truth table.

A	B	A and B	A or B
T	T	T	T
T	F	F	T
F	T	F	T
F	F	F	F

The first two columns show the possible combinations of A and B being True or False. The third column shows that both statement A and statement B must be true for the "And" argument to be true. The fourth column shows that both statement A and statement B must be false for the "Or" argument to be false. An argument is said to be valid when all the True or False

characters of the statements and the argument hold in all known circumstances.

These accord with our intuition of these arguments, and even show that they are, in an upside-down sense, the opposites of each other. It turns out that all arguments involving statements A and B can be made up of combinations of "And" and "Or" arguments, and these are the foundation of basic computing. (In fact, a logician will tell you that the "Or" can be constructed out of a combination of "And" and "Not-And" statements.) Try for yourself the equivalence argument where both A and B must be True or both A and B must be False for the equivalence to be True.

The most useful, and frustrating, argument is the IF-Then argument. It is the basis of consistent deduction and hence prognostication. Its truth table for combinations of excluded middle statements (again labeled A and B) is given below.

A	B	If A Then B
T	T	T
T	F	F
F	T	T
F	F	T

This seems peculiar to us at first glance because we tend to want to use only the first two rows. This however reflects our intuition that a False premise, A, can be consistently argued to either a True or a False conclusion, B. We therefore assume that when we are making an argument, False premises are not of interest. Ignoring False premises can lead to all kinds of confusion and mischief as we will see later.

Let's examine these conditions using the argument "If the sky is blue then the sun is shining." The rule of determination will be observation. 'The sky is blue' is statement A; 'the Sun is shining' is statement B. We are familiar with the case where both a blue sky and shining sun are present, so the first row works. We also are familiar with the case of a hazy day where the sun is shining but there is no blue sky, so the third row works. Likewise, we are familiar with the case of night-time where there is no blue sky and no shining sun, so the fourth row works. However, I am not aware of any case where there is a blue sky observed with the sun not in evidence, and we know that the blue comes from selective scattering of light by nitrogen in the upper atmosphere, so the 2nd row works in that the argument gives a false result. All the rows are satisfied in the truth table so the argument itself is deemed Valid or "True," and the claim can be used as a premise in other If-Then arguments.

The mischief of argument comes in (at least) two ways: 1) Failing to establish the rule of determination; and 2) Changing the rule of determination between the evaluation of the simple statements and the overall argument itself.

The first mischief can occur in many ways. Take for example the old freshman fallacy that something is "obvious." I rather enjoy confounding my students' sense that two volumes combine to make the sum volume by combining a beaker of white cotton and a beaker of water, both full to the brim. Not only do they combine into the same beaker, but the water level is slightly less than the original beaker. In the early 20th century physicists were confounded when the masses of the two products of radioactive decay did not add to that of the parent atom. In both cases, the assumption that interactions must not matter was not included in the rule of determination that

was considered obvious and hence led to the violation of the "obvious" rule.

Another issue results from the assertion that every person's truth is equally valid. This has the effect of shutting down discourse. If one can assert the truth or falsehood of any given statement based on pure discretion, then the premise of any related argument leaves the veracity of that argument suspect. This is because the premise itself cannot simply be declared to be false when there are common definitions, rules, and standards.

This type of assertion is foundational to the assertions of "fake news" currently in public discourse as well as the accompanying confusion concerning the intent of the speaker and implications of his or her assertion. It also is foundational to the righteous denials of free speech and calls for "discomfort warnings" that currently plague our campuses. It is indeed ironic that well-intentioned attempts by the intellectual left to broaden the perspective of the academy have confounded public discourse and rendered it difficult for faculty and students to participate meaningfully in that public discourse.

The second type of mischief occurs, in my experience, mostly in application of the contra-positive argument. The contra-positive of 'If the sky is blue then the sun is shining" is "If the sun is not shining then the sky is not blue'. Note that the negative of the original statements is used in the contra-positive and the order reversed. This tempts the arguer to change, or negate, the rule of True/False in the process. For example, it would be simple to re-interpret 'the sun is not shining' as 'it is night' -- thus ignoring the third line in our truth table of possibilities and rendering the argument invalid by the original rule. An example

from public discourse is the assertion that since there are record cold temperatures during winter, then global warming is a hoax. This implicitly assumes that climate is represented by the extremes of temperature during a year. Of course, in coming to this conclusion the advocates of global warming construct their argument based on an average of the temperature of every day of the year. While these arguments address the same set of general observations, they simply are not part of the same universe of validation. Both arguments are in some sense true, but in each other's universe the conclusions are part of the irrelevance of a false premise. No wonder we perceive the protagonists as talking past one another – they are.

So why do I offer this rather pedestrian discussion of argument in a forum read by academics whose bread and butter *is* argument? I offer three answers. First, we are prone to carelessness in what we do often: familiarity breeds contempt. Think of the number of times we have said something stupid in class and had to walk it back. (This is a teachable moment if one is quick witted -- which unfortunately the author is not.) Most likely these situations arise in the context of an unclear or un-appreciated consideration of a rule in one's discipline. Second the academy has inherited from the Enlightenment a common understanding that teaching students about the structure and content of good argument is of the utmost importance. Often instruction begins with high school geometry and ends with upper-level college courses in philosophy. It has been my experience as a teacher that people in the modern day have become rather good at making consistent and clever arguments but are rather poor at understanding the logical bases of their claims. We need to adjust our teaching so that we emphasize the logical process of determining True and

False. We should stress the importance of conducting critical evaluations of the sources and substance of the statements we make.   Likewise, we should show students how and why our discipline determines True/False taking time to point out relevant shortcomings but insisting that appropriate disciplinary rules be used and followed.

Finally, the question of which among our various disciplinary determinations rises to the "best" is an undecidable meta-argument (in the sense of Goedel), appropriate only to seasoned and experienced contenders and probably best left to higher powers. It represents a question that transcends undergraduate education. Students have their whole lives to get there. Will these three observations_ solve the problems of argument in the academy? Probably not. But without them, I fear that we will become irrelevant.

Truth and Inspiration in an Inter-Spiritual World

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"Truth is eternal. Our knowledge of it is changeable. It is disastrous when you confuse the two." ~ Madeleine L'Engle

My academic discipline is Christian Spirituality, and I have primarily taught seminarians in the area of spiritual formation, the history of Christian spirituality, and Quaker history and theology. My spiritual and theological identity is Christocentric Quaker, but I've always been open to learning from all spiritual traditions. One cannot long teach in the numinous and sometimes esoteric arena of spirituality (or of Quakerism), without coming face-to-face with questions about truth and reality. The first set of questions concerns the plurality of truth: Can we really know ultimate truth or the nature of reality? Is all truth/reality plural? The second set concerns the idea of "relational knowledge": Is there a hierarchy of truth or a diversity of truth claims within different religions, with some more "true" than others? Is all truth a point of view from one limited perspective? Is truth contextual? Contingent? Questions such as these involve what William James once described as mysticism, "states of knowledge and insight into the depths of truth beyond discursive intellect."[1]

Our Quakers forebears were fully confident that Christ as the Light within was speaking to them personally when Jesus told his disciples "the Spirit of truth will guide you to the whole truth" (John 16:13) and "the truth will set you free" (John 8:32). Early Quakers were so certain that their faith was the truth as revealed by the Inward Light and the bible and as preached by the Apostles that they always spoke of it as "The Truth" with a capital T. Their spiritual work, their life's purpose, was called the "service of Truth." So certain were they of "The Truth" that nineteenth century Quaker, Hannah Whitall Smith, wrote in her autobiography that her father's horses and carriages were called "Truth's horses and carriages" because they were continually called upon to transport preachers from one meeting to another.[2] She declares, "With the unquestioning faith of childhood I fully believed all this, and grew up with a distinct idea that we "Friends" had practically a monopoly of "The Truth," with a strong emphasis on the definite article, which differentiated it entirely from the holding of one truth among many. Ours was the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and could not be improved upon. Such was my idea in the days of my youth."[3]

Since those early idealistic days, absolute confidence in "The Truth" has changed drastically for Friends. Smith spent her life seeking truth and would later acknowledge her inter-faith sympathies as she came to

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[1] James' definition is a classic one: "Although similar to states of feeling, mystical states seem to those who experience them to be also states of knowledge. They are states of insight into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect. They are illuminations, revelations, full of significance and importance, all inarticulate though they remain, and as a rule they carry with them a curious sense of authority for aftertime. (William James, *Varieties of Religious*

Experience, 1902, 380). *While this is one classic definition, the variety of mystics and mysticism makes it difficult, if not impossible, to define.*
[2] Hannah Whitall Smith, *The Unselfishness of God and How I Discovered It: A Spiritual Autobiography*, N.Y: Revell, 1903, Kindle, location 588.
[3] Ibid.

believe that "absolute truth lies at the foundation of all 'creeds.'"[4]

Today we recognize plurality, variety and diversity -- there are many human understandings of truth, but is there a Reality beyond our diverse perceptions of truth? Can we ever know "absolute truth," or do we always see through a glass darkly? Is truth one or is it many? We all know the illustration of the blind men and the elephant. How the one said that it was this, one said it was that, depending on what part of the elephant they handled, in other words, depending on what portion of truth is revealed to them. Since people see from their own perspectives, their own contexts, the question that arises is who has the whole "absolute truth," the 360-degree view of the truth? Who knows the whole elephant? Do the Christians, the Muslims, the Buddhists, the scientists, the mystics?

We are now aware that for the first time in history the great religions of the world are meeting each other within a global environment. We are living in an inter-spiritual age. *In my field of Christian spirituality, truth and truth seeking revolve around inter-spirituality and navigate through inter-faith dialogue.* A theologian who has helped shape my understanding of truth in this new inter-spiritual age is Raimon Panikkar (1918 -2010), a Jesuit priest and one of the great Christian mystics of our age. The son a of Hindu father and Catalan Catholic mother, Panikkar was raised in Barcelona in a cross-cultural family. But he is also a natural scientist, philosopher, historian, phenomenologist of religion and pioneer in inter-spiritual dialogue. After his first trip to India in 1954 he said upon returning: "I left (Europe) as a Christian; found myself a Hindu; and I return as a Buddhist, without having ceased to be a Christian."[5] He believed that inter- and intra-faith dialogue is the urgent task of religions, moving us toward the creation of new forms of human consciousness--and new forms of religiousness -- in which the whole universe expands. Intra-faith dialogue involves the "crossing-over" of traditions in a way that doesn't force one to abandon one's own spiritual tradition but deepens and extends it. Something new is created at the level of human and religious consciousness. He summarizes what he has discovered:

> The pluralism of truth is an eye-opener, first of all, for contingency; I don't have a 360-degree vision; nobody has. Second, and here is the most daring notion, truth is pluralistic because reality itself is pluralistic, not being an objectifiable entity. We subjects are also part of it. We are not only spectators of the Real, we are also co-actors and even co-authors of it. This is precisely our human dignity."[6]

So as a confessing Christian who finds inspiration and sacred wisdom in scripture, when I read in John 14:6 that Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth and the life," I must ask, what does this mean in the inter-spiritual world of the twenty-first century? Does this mean, as many Christians insist, that believing in certain dogmatic understandings about Jesus is the way to truth? Or does it mean that all illuminations of truth, whether a person is aware of Jesus or not, are given to them by God (who may be called by many names)? Even a divine revelation of truth must be interpreted by a human receiver and is embedded in the culture

[4] Smith, *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*, N.Y.: Revel, 2010, iv.

[5] Raimon Panikkar, *The Intra-Religious Dialogue,* New York: Paulist Press, 1978, 2.

[6]

http://www.dhdi.free.fr/recherches/horizonsinterculturels/articles/panikkarpluralism. pdf.

of their time and place, therefore the receiver who may be given a depth of insight, or illumination, will still see only partially, or may only see "the finger pointing to the moon." And even more challenging, as quantum physics has confirmed with the double-slit experiment, light waves can also behave as particles depending on the subject viewing it, so that we subjects in some sense shape Reality. Even when we are given a glimpse of the Real, we cannot totally comprehend it, and when viewed by different subjects from different vantage points, truth may look quite different. Therefore, Reality itself is multi-faceted. It is pluralistic. It is not One.

Panikkar claims that we, as Christians, can overcome our culturally embedded Christology by what he calls a Christophany—which permits Christians to recognize Christ everywhere without pretending to monopolize the mystery that we name as Christ.[7] Early Quakers in their belief in the universal Light of Christ had a partial intuition of this concept, but they were certain that their understanding of Christ was the most complete version. And since their theology, like all theology, developed in a specific concrete historical and geographical context, early Quaker Christology was embedded in a Western imperialist culture. Panikkar reminds us that "The Christian truth is not the monopoly of a sect, a treatise imposed by a kind of colonization, but an eruption that has existed since the dawn of time, which St. Paul defined very well as 'a mystery that has existed since the beginning,' and of which we Christians know only a very small part."[8]

As Quakers, we can agree with Pannikar that we are created with a human consciousness that permits a mystical communication that exists across many divides. At a doctrinal and intellectual level, religious systems may be incompatible, but on the experiential (or mystical) level, there can be communication among those who live in the spirit. As it says in John 3:8, the spirit breathes into humanity, where, when and how it wills.

Although Christianity is not a universal religion, the experience of Christ allows for Christians to participate in what Pannikar calls a "cosmo-vison," which goes beyond understanding Christ as dogmatic or metaphysical speculation to embrace the realm of experience, the light in which Christ is manifested to us. Each religion can enter this experience by appreciating the whole in one's particular part. One can enter the whole of reality through one's part and bring together the varied metaphors so that there is a symbolic transformation of experiences. He calls this a "convergence of hearts, not just the coalescence of minds."[9] The experience of God at the mystic level is nondual—a touching of ultimate reality with the totality of our being, so that we feel in our body, mind, and spirit, the whole of reality or of truth, within us and outside of us. "Paradoxically, it is the experience of contingency: we merely touch the infinite at a point.[10] Nobody has access to "the universal horizon of human experience."[11]

Much of Panikkar's work has focused on new understandings of the Trinity. Somewhat surprisingly, he suggests that the Trinity provides a framework for Christians to relate to other religions. One of his key contributions has been a major breakthrough

[7] Raimon Panikkar, *Christophany: The Fullness of Man,* Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2004.
[8] "Eruption of Truth, Interview with Raimon Panikkar on Inter- and Intrareligious Dialogue," *Christian Century*, August 16, 2000.

[9] Panikkar, *Intra-Religious Dialogue, 14.*
[10] Panikkar, *The Experience of God: Icons of the Mystery,* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006, 141.
[11] Panikkar, *Intra-Religious Dialogue*, 91.

in inter-religious dialogue. He sees Trinity as a dynamic symbol, entrusted in a particular way to Christianity, but universal in its scope. He claims that the threefold pattern-- traditionally *Theos-anthropos-cosmos* -- is found in all religions and cultures. He coins the word cosmotheandric to describe this pattern. The Trinity is the cosmotheandric vision, a fusion of *cosmos* (world), *theos* (God), and *andros* (man). The Trinity is a continuous inter-circulation among this triad, three dimensions of reality in a single motion of self-communicating love. This is not a new idea. Since the Middle Ages, it has been called *perichoresis* -- "dancing around." He is clear that the Trinity is not substance, as in patristic formulation, but pure relationality. He describes the cosmotheandric principle as an "intuition of the threefold structure of all reality, the triadic oneness existing on all levels of consciousness and reality."[12] The Trinity is Christianity's non-dual vision, God is neither one (monism) nor two (dualism). He explains:

> The cosmotheandric principle could be stated by saying that the divine, the human and the earthly--however we may prefer to call them--are the three irreducible dimensions which constitute the real, i.e., any reality inasmuch as it is real... What this intuition emphasizes is that the three dimensions of reality are neither three modes of a monolithic undifferentiated reality, nor are they three elements of a pluralistic system. There is rather one, though intrinsically threefold, relation which expresses the ultimate constitution of reality. Everything that exists, any real being, presents this triune constitution expressed in three dimensions.

I am not only saying that everything is directly or indirectly related to everything else: the radical relativity or *pratityasamutpada* of the Buddhist tradition. I am also stressing that this relationship is not only constitutive of the whole, but that it flashes forth, ever new and vital, in every spark of the real.[13]

Panikkar suggests that by using the Trinity to approach other religions, we can "discover a meeting ground for the religions based on these different spiritual attitudes without doing violence to their fundamental intuitions."[14] This approach allows for a pluralism that retains variety and individual identity while affirming a unity in diversity. This is not the same as relativism, which has no criteria for discernment, nor perennialism, which claims that at the core of all religions, all spirituality has a center that is the same. Truth may not always have the same center. I have come to understand Truth as process, mobile and dynamic, with the center often shifting. As soon as we think we have arrived at Truth, we will see there is always more to discover, for truth like love is relational and eternal. Truth is not dyadic (i.e., this is true, and this is not truth) but instead takes the form this is true, and this also is true. Truth is paradoxical yet noncontradictory, for the true and not true could be reconciled but not into a unity; rather, a new truth can emerge or evolve out of the two.

For example, as a Christocentric Christian Quaker in a relationship with a nontheist Buddhist, I might say, "You are right! But I am right too!" We can both be right in the context in which we think, as well as in

[12] Panikkar, *The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973), ix.

[13] Panikkar, *Cosmotheandric Experience,* 74.
[14] Panikkar, "Toward an Ecumenical Theandric Spirituality," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies,* V (1968), 522.

the context of the relationship itself. What is not essentially or absolutely true is that truth always needs the same center. The center will shift as our contexts change and as our relationships change.

Building on Panikkar's experiential understanding of the Trinity, theologian, mystic and contemplative teacher Cynthia Bourgeault has developed a grand theory called "The Law of Three."[15] It does not involve the Hegelian thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, with synthesis as the product that equals truth. Instead, it contains a reconciling principle that brings the first two elements into relationship out of which a new truth emerges, and on and on, as truth continues to evolve. Truth is infinite, eternal, thus a process that is never-ending, as new light, new phenomena, new awakenings come into being. Bourgeault explains the foundational principles of the Law of Three:

1. In every new arising there are three forces involved: affirming, denying, and reconciling.
2. The interweaving of the three produces a fourth in a new dimension.
3. Affirming, denying, and reconciling are not fixed points or permanent essence attributes. They can and do shift and must be discerned situationally. Solutions to impasses or sticking points generally come by learning how to spot and mediate third force, which is present in every situation but generally hidden. The idea of third force is found in religion in the concept of the Trinity.[16]

But third force is not easy to attune to because our usual consciousness is skewed toward the binary, toward "either/or." Bourgeault admits that attuning to third force is difficult because our usual consciousness lacks the sensitivity to stay present to third force. Consistent contemplative practice in silent worship as Quakers have practiced for centuries in community, or contemplative prayer individually, can enable practitioners to access and be present to this third force, which in biblical terms is "putting on the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16). Bourgeault regards consistent contemplative practice as essential in developing attunement to third force. This deeper or higher consciousness can bring forth a new element, a new arising, as unseen truth opens into a dimension that goes beyond dualistic thinking. The dualistic mind lacks both the sensitivity and the actual physical capacity to stay present to third force, which requires an established ability to live beyond the opposites. Because the Law of Three is a "fundamental cosmic law," it is open to all religions and secular points of access.[17]

But as noted in point 5, Bourgeault considers the concept of the Trinity to be a perfect theological example of the Law of Three. God is one, God is three. What sounds like a contradiction, is a coincidence of opposites. The truth of one statement is contradicted by its opposite, which is equally true. So, while we could say truth is polar, the coincidence of opposites, we could also say that truth is triadic. Truth is three, and new truth is always emerging. Judaism was monotheist, there is one God. Christianity evolved out of Judaism and became Triadic—Trinitarian, as new truth emerged. The center shifted. The truth of God is monotheism, God is one. But God is also Spirit, God is also incarnate, in a person Jesus. In the beginning was the Word, *logos,* with

[15] She claims inklings of the principle can be found in Jacob Boehme, Teilhard de Chardin, and Raimon Panikkar but was only articulated in the early twentieth century by esoteric spiritual teachers, such as G.I. Gurdjeiff, Maurice Nicoll, and P.D. Ouspensky, among others.

[16] Cynthia Bourgeault, *The Holy Trinity and the Law of Three* (Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2013) 24-25.

[17] Ibid, 206.

God, the source, the center, the One, but the one center is also three.

One way to recognize and consciously mediate or attune to third force on a praxis level is through the Quaker process of discernment and consensual decision-making, which seems to me, has roots in the Law of Three. Rather than majority rule, the Quaker spiritual discernment process aims to find solutions to problems that go beyond winners and losers or even compromise, a spiritual practice based on the Law of Three, though never articulated in that way.

Bourgeault hopes to see the Law of Three applied on a global scale. She asks us to imagine "how the energies of our planet would shift if we as Christians took seriously our obligation to work with the Law of Three as our fundamental spiritual praxis. Face-to-face with the vast challenges of our times—environmental, economic, political—we would avoid making judgments (because according to the Law of Three, denying force is a legitimate player in every equation), set our sights higher than 'winners and losers' (or even negotiated compromise), and instead strive in all situations to align our minds and hearts with third force."[18]

Although Bourgeault does not believe that any of the great patristic architects of Christian theology had any knowledge or recognition of the Law of Three, I find hints of it in the fourth century Greek theologian-mystic, Gregory of Nyssa. He did not identify the principle but describes an intuition of the process in his philosophy of knowledge. In his *Homilies on the Song of Songs* he describes the expansion of experiential knowledge using the symbol of dynamic, unending ascent, a continuing adventure of discovery: "At each instant what is grasped is much greater than what had been grasped before, but since what we are seeking is unlimited, the end of each discovery becomes the starting point for the discovery of something higher, and the ascent continues….We go from beginning to beginning by way of beginnings without end."[19] In other words, as Bourgeault contends, new forms of religiousness and new forms of human conscious continually expand into a new divine becoming. Each new arising becomes the starting point for a new dimension of reality and new forms of truth. And Panikkar, too, stresses the open-ended, unfinished, unlimited, ever new character of reality, which he terms *creatio continua*, the radical newness of each "moment"—not only of time but also of space, and ultimately of reality.[20] Both of these mystic-theologians have helped me see and explore the plurality of truth in a radical new way by moving me out of the dualisms that dominate modern Western thinking and into a new ternary understanding of reality.

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Gregory of Nyssa, *Homilies on the Song of Songs,* 8 (*Patrologia Graeca*, 44, 940-1).

[20] Raimon Panikkar, *The Rhythm of Being: The Gifford Lectures*, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 2010, (Kindle Locations 691-692).

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The summer 2019 Friends Association for Higher Education conference focused on the broad theme "Truth and Inspiration." The following poems from the nineteenth century have been chosen to reflect various aspects of that theme.

William Wordsworth (British, 1770-1850) grew up and lived much of his life in the Lake District, an agricultural area in the northwest part of England near the border with Scotland. Although he wrote widely about politics, the human imagination, and rural people, he is often thought of as a nature poet, as many of his early and most well-known poems consider the relationship between the natural and human worlds. In "Expostulation and Reply," a poem included in his revolutionary 1798 collection, *Lyrical Ballads*, co-authored with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Wordsworth presents a dialogue between two friends, Matthew and William (yes, a likely spokesperson for Wordsworth himself), in which the characters discuss where truth and revelation may come from.

Expostulation and Reply

"Why, William, on that old grey stone,
Thus for the length of half a day,
Why, William, sit you thus alone,
And dream your time away?

"Where are your books? –that light bequeathed
To Beings else forlorn and blind!
Up! up! and drink the spirit breathed
From dead men to their kind.

"You look round on your Mother Earth,
As if she for no purpose bore you;
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before you!"

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
When life was sweet, I knew not why,
To me my good friend Matthew spake,
And thus I made reply.

"The eye—it cannot choose but see,
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
Against, or with our will.

"Nor less I deem that there are Powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

"Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?

"— Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
Conversing as I may,
I sit upon this old grey stone,
And dream my time away."

John Keats (British, 1795-1821) was born in London and lived a brief, full life, dying of tuberculosis at the age of twenty-five. He experienced great personal loss and sorrow early in life, losing his father, his mother, and one of his brothers to accident or illness, all by the time he was twenty-three. He was pressed for money from the time of his father's death and propelled by a guardian into studying medicine when his greatest desire was to write poetry, but Keats was also blessed with excellent friends and the literary and cultural resources of England's capital city, finding mentors and patrons to guide, support, and house him while

he wrote some of the most melodic and philosophically-rich poetry in English of the nineteenth century. "Ode on a Grecian Urn," written in 1819, the miraculous year in which Keats produced his most mature and memorable poetry, addresses a Greek vase that depicts a pastoral scene and a group of ancient people processing toward a ceremonial sacrifice. The poem presents a meditation upon the longing for permanence in a world riddled by transience and change as well as complex thoughts about the relationship between truth and the beautiful artifacts created by human beings.

Ode on a Grecian Urn

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
    Thou foster-child of silence and slow
        time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
    A flowery tale more sweetly than our
        rhyme:
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
    Of deities or mortals, or of both, In Tempe or the dales of Arcady? What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
    What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
    Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
    Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
    Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
        Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;

    She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
        For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
    Your leaves, nor ever bid the spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
    For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
    For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
        For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
    That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
        A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
    To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
    And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
    Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
        Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
    Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
        Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
    Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
    Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
    When old age shall this generation waste,

Thou shalt remain, in midst of
other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou
say'st,
        "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is
all
        Ye know on earth, and all ye need
to know.

    Emily Dickinson (American, 1830-1886) was famously reclusive, interacting face-to-face with only a small number of family and friends, but writing hundreds of poems and maintaining a robust correspondence with many. Her life in Amherst, Massachusetts, was also limited in many ways by her gender, but her poems reveal an inner life and experiences of the natural world that were explosive, revelatory, and extraordinary. Although the great bulk of her work (some 1,800 poems) was published after her death, she is now seen as one of the key originators of a distinctive American voice in verse. Much of her work conforms to the metrical standards of nineteenth-century hymns, but her unique use of punctuation, striking figures of speech, fantastically-inventive topics, and witty deployment of word-play and slant rhyme demonstrate extraordinary creativity and a most capacious mind. "Tell all the Truth but tell it slant" meditates on the power of truth, suggesting we can be overwhelmed by its lightning jolt. It reminds us that our capacity for receiving truth -- be it spiritual, personal, philosophical, or even scientific -- may be hampered by the all-too-human limits of our ability for "Delight."

Tell All the Truth but Tell It Slant

Tell all the Truth but tell it slant –
Success in Circuit lies
Too bright for our infirm Delight
The Truth's superb surprise
As Lightning to the Children eased
With explanation kind
The Truth must dazzle gradually
Or every man be blind —