

1984

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JOHN C. BROUGHER:  
A Life of Christian Stewardship

by  
Eric Hagen

Prof. Mark Weinert  
History Seminar 490  
November 28, 1984

The date of May 20, 1973 was an important day in the history of George Fox College. As well as being graduation day for over seventy students, it was also the occasion for the presentation of an honorary doctorate to Dr. John C. Brougher, M.D. This rare honor had only been bestowed eleven times in the previous eighty two years.<sup>1</sup> What made this award even more unusual was the fact that most of the previous awards had gone to former College presidents or to faculty members with a record of outstanding service to the College. Brougher had never worked for George Fox in any official capacity, rather he had pursued his full time career as medical doctor in Vancouver, Washington. What was it, then, that made Brougher deserving of such an honor?

The doctoral citation that was read that day gives some insights into the qualities that set Brougher apart. It said, "He demonstrates a Quaker concern for using one's gifts to the glory of God, accepting the beauty of the earth and loving its creatures."<sup>2</sup> It was also said that he was one, "whose healing arts reach past immediate needs to touch men's lives for beauty, truth, and love."<sup>3</sup> Perhaps his contributions were best summed up by interim president , William D. Green.

"Few people in the history of the college have done more for it than Dr. John Brougher. He has been one of the most generous of all donors, and over the years has maintained a loving concern for the institution and its welfare."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>J. H. Corson, President of Willamette University, to John C. Brougher, Vancouver, June 1, 1973, personal files of Esther Brougher, Newberg, Oregon.

<sup>2</sup>George Fox College, Honorary Doctorate Citation honoring John C. Brougher, issued May 20, 1973, George Fox College Commencement, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>4</sup>Office of College Relations, "Dr. John C. Brougher Dies", News, George Fox College, January 6, 1983.



Brougher devoted his life to careful Christian stewardship and this dedication affected every aspect of his life. He truly believed that his talents and resources were only to be valued if they were spent in service to God.

One cannot pass judgement on the real nature of a man or his accomplishments by merely focusing on the honors that he received. The true measure of a man can be found in the struggles and challenges that he had to face and conquer in order to earn those honors. It is important that an individual is not judged on the basis of a few isolated events. In order to make an accurate evaluation it is necessary to determine consistency by focusing on the entire life of the individual in question. For these reasons it is necessary to follow the path of Brougher's life from beginning to end in order to discover the sources of his values and beliefs and to determine the consistency of his actions throughout his life.

John Challen Brougher was born June 9, 1901, on a small farm on Lockwood Hill in LaCenter, Washington.<sup>5</sup> He was the sixth child to be born in a family of eight. His father, A. L. Brougher, had come from Indiana in 1890.<sup>6</sup> At the time of John's birth, his father helped to operate a mercantile downtown LaCenter. He was described as being a "well informed, family man whose kindness drew others to him."<sup>7</sup> He had a deeply rooted faith in God and led his family to attend the Methodist Church in LaCenter regularly. John's mother, Cara Barnes Brougher, was a supportive wife whose gentle spirit allowed her to successfully manage the duties of the household and

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<sup>5</sup>Bob Beck, "Vancouver Doctor Brought 10,000 into World," The Columbian, July 15, 1979, p. 125

<sup>6</sup>Interview with Esther Brougher, Friendsview Manor, Newberg, Oregon, November 22, 1984.

<sup>7</sup>Interview with Esther Brougher.

manage the duties of the household and be a loving mother as well.<sup>8</sup>

John's parents were an important influence on him and instilled strong values within him. First and foremost his parents showed a dedication to God that was evidenced by word and deed. Another value that John learned was the importance of hard work and discipline. As John's father once remarked in a letter, "We have tried to teach our children by word and action the importance of honest labor."<sup>9</sup> Also important to the family, was good stewardship. A. L. Brougher believed that, "It is not always so much what you earn, as it is what you save."<sup>10</sup> Finally John learned to take joy in each day and to look to God for providence. His father told him that, "it certainly is the great privilege of life to enjoy each day as they come and go - do your best and trust God for the result and usually all will be well."<sup>11</sup>

In 1906, when John was only five years old, an incident occurred that left a profound impression on the young boy and was destined to shape his later life. One morning, a mother was busy washing clothes across the street from the store that John's father helped to operate. She left her work momentarily and when she returned, she was shocked to find that her two year old son had fallen into the washtub and drowned. In a panic she took the child into her arms and rushed him to the nearest doctor's office

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<sup>8</sup>Interview with Esther Brougher

<sup>9</sup>A. L. Brougher to John Brougher, Portland, June 5, 1927, p. 3, personal files of Esther Brougher, Newberg, Oregon.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 4.



which happened to be across the street above the general mercantile where A. L. Brougher worked. Young John saw the mother burst into the store carrying her child, and he watched breathlessly as Dr. Zener worked frantically to revive him. To the delight of the mother and several onlookers, the doctor was able to revive the child. After this memorable experience, young John said to his mother, "Mommy, if I could help people like that I would do it the rest of my life."<sup>12</sup>

Soon after this incident, in 1907, the Brougher family moved to Scotts Mills, Oregon, near Silverton. This move was prompted by A. L. Brougher's desire to own and operate his own store. John spent the remainder of his childhood in this small town. It was at this time that the family switched from the Methodist to the Quaker denomination. They began to attend the Scotts Mills Friends Church which had been established in 1894.<sup>14</sup> This was significant because John was to remain heavily involved in the Friends Church for the rest of his life.

John was one of a seven member class who graduated from Scotts Mills High School in 1919.<sup>15</sup> Despite his humble, small town education, John was encouraged to attend Willamette University in Salem by a professor of that institution who had been impressed with his intelligence and self discipline. John was accepted into the University, but he faced tough challenges in

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<sup>12</sup>Interview with Esther Brougher

<sup>13</sup>Beck, p. 25.

<sup>14</sup>Interview with Esther Brougher

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

the difficult pre-med program. What made things worse was the fact that John had not been taught Latin in high school and was forced to take it at the University without credit. Despite the difficulties that he faced, John excelled in his studies. He became a member of the Cresto Club, a literary organization and even found time to work with the Highland Friends Church youth group.

During his senior year in college, John met someone who was to dramatically affect his life. For sometime John had been dating a girl who had a friend by the name of Esther Bauman. Esther was also dating a young man who John was acquainted with. The two couples would double date frequently. In this way John and Esther were able to get to know one another. By the end of the year, both John and Esther had broken up with their former dating partners and they soon began to date each other.

This relationship continued as John entered the University of Oregon Medical School and Esther returned to Willamette University. Esther graduated from Willamette and taught school for a year while John finished medical school. John received a masters degree in science, and he and Esther were married on June 14, 1927.<sup>16</sup>

The first year of their marriage found the young couple living with Esther's parents while John interned at the hospital. John had to spend most of his time at the hospital but Esther visited him frequently. In order to spend more time with John, Esther helped him with some of his hospital duties such as the feeding of the laboratory animals and the cleaning of their pens.<sup>17</sup> John and Esther were devoted to each other throughout their marriage that lasted more than fifty years.

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<sup>16</sup>"Broughers Mark Goldendate Early", The Columbian, May 18, 1977, p. 22.

<sup>17</sup>Interview with Esther Brougher.



John received his medical degree in 1929 and was anxious to begin his own practice. He travelled to Vancouver to see Dr. Zener, the same man who had saved the little boy in John's presence twenty three years earlier. Their meeting resulted in Zener asking John to become his associate.

On July 16, 1929, with the Great Depression looming on the horizon, Dr. John C. Brougher treated his first patient in Vancouver.<sup>18</sup> Thus began a career that was to last more than fifty years. In September of that first year John delivered his first baby. Throughout his extended career he delivered more than 10,000 babies.<sup>19</sup> Within a year's time, Zener decided to retire and John bought out his practice.

In those early years, the most common place to deliver a baby was at home. The doctor's fee was \$35, which included seeing the baby monthly for one year for examinations and feeding instructions, and daily house calls to the new mother for six or seven days.<sup>20</sup> In that early Depression period John's customers had little or no money. In exchange for his services, John often received milk, eggs or stove wood in payment.<sup>21</sup>

John struggled to get patients at first, but as word of his skill and care for his patients spread, his clientele began to grow quickly. John's success stemmed from his ability to gain the trust and confidence of his patients. John had an optimism that was contagious. His kind, friendly nature put people at ease, making them feel safe in his hands. At John's death his wife Esther received many letters from former patients praising his special care. As one patient said, "There (never) was or never will be anyone like him as a doctor or a person."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Beck, p. 25.

<sup>19</sup>Honorary Doctorate Citation, p. 2.

<sup>20</sup>Beck, p. 25.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid, p. 25.

<sup>22</sup>Chris and Chuck Delong to Esther Brougher, Newberg, January, 1983.



Throughout his long career, John remained dedicated to his patients and they repaid him by sending their friends and relatives to him.

By the mid 1930's it became clear to John that his practice was growing too large for him to handle by himself. In 1934 he and Esther had visited the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota and this clinic concept of specialists interested him.<sup>23</sup> In June, 1936, Dr. Frank Boersma, who had just finished his internship, joined him as an associate and one year later became a partner.<sup>24</sup> Another partner, Dr. Leslie Frewing, joined the two doctors in 1937. He had been a former classmate of John's at Willamette.<sup>25</sup> One more doctor joined the group two years later. Dr. David Loree left his practice in Wenatchee to join the doctors in 1939.<sup>26</sup>

In 1939, the four doctors incorporated under the name of Vancouver Medical and Surgical Clinic.<sup>27</sup> Brougher limited his work to obstetrics and gynecology, Frewing specialized in surgery, Loree practiced pediatrics and Boersma did general medicine. The clinic concept was very successful. The clinic grew during the war years and the doctors opened a new larger clinic building in 1956. Growth continued until by 1975, 21 doctors were in the group. On January 28, 1978, ground was broken for the construction of a new clinic.<sup>28</sup>

Throughout his medical career, John was devoted to using his talents and resources to serve God. He and Esther joined the fledgling Vancouver Friends Church, becoming charter members in 1929. This was an act of faith to leave the established Methodist Church with

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<sup>23</sup>Beck, p. 25.

<sup>24</sup>Interview with Esther Brougher

<sup>25</sup>Interview with Esther Brougher

<sup>26</sup>Interview with Esther Brougher

<sup>27</sup>Beck, p. 25.

<sup>28</sup>

Beck, p. 25.

with so many prospective patients as well. Esther had been a Methodist for her entire life and John had attended with her when they were married. They had prayed about this decision and felt that it was God's will for them to support the new Friend's Church. They remained active members and supporters of this church for more than fifty years.<sup>29</sup>

Their Christian service was always a team effort. John was asked to teach a Young Married's Sunday School Class which he did until his frequent house calls made it impossible for him to continue. At this point Esther took over and led the class for a number of years. With the support of the Broughers and other dedicated families like them, the church grew and prospered.

The Brougher's made many contributions to help area churches, as well as the infant mission work of Oregon (now Northwest) Yearly Meeting of Friends Church in Bolivia, and the Friends Church Conference camp ground at Twin Rocks, Oregon.<sup>30</sup> Early in their lives together John and Esther had vowed to live simply and to give a tithe to Church work. They gradually increased the percentage and amounts as his practice grew.

These early years were not without trial and hardship. John and Esther had to make many decisions by faith and trust God for the result. John and Esther were commended for their faith in a letter sent to them from Charles Beals, a former pastor. He remembered, "When you were in debt in order to buy expensive medical equipment including an x-ray, you borrowed additional money to give the Church for a new roof."

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<sup>29</sup>"Personality profile: Dr. John and Esther Brougher", Vancouver Friends Church Newsletter, March, 1977.

<sup>30</sup>"Dr. John C. Brougher: 1902-1983", George Fox College Life, February, 1983, p. 2.



He went on to say:

You continued tithing during these hardship years. I recall once when you were tempted to rationalize by taking a year's moratorium on tithing, so that you could pay off your debt that year and release more money the following year for the church. You did not yield and the Lord honored you to the extent that you continued tithing and also paid off your debt that same year.<sup>31</sup>

These are just a few examples of John and Esthers concern to give of themselves and trust God to care for their needs.

John and Esther were also active in the Jason Lee Missionary Society. This was a group that met once a month to discuss missions efforts around the world. Usually, a missionary home on furlough would come to share his or her experiences in order to keep the group members well informed. The primary goal of this organization was to support missionaries both financially and with prayer support.

Included with John's other interests was a strong desire to support Christian Education. He was a fervent supporter of two Christian Colleges, George Fox College in Newberg, Oregon, and Cascade College in Portland. His support of these institutions was both tangible, by way of financial support, and intangible, through the wise counsel and prayerful support that he offered during his service on the Board of Trustees of both colleges.

John joined the Board of Trustees at George Fox College in 1946.<sup>32</sup> He and Esther contributed generously to the college at a time when the school had few supporters. In fact, during this early period, there were several years in which the Broughers gave more to the College than any other person or corporation.<sup>33</sup> Milo C. Ross, President

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<sup>31</sup>Charles Beals, Executive Director of Friendsview Manor to John Brougher, Vancouver, June 5, 1970, personal files of Esther Brougher.

<sup>32</sup>George Fox College, Distinguished Service Award Citation, June 5, 1970, p.1

<sup>33</sup>Milo C. Ross, President Emeritus of George Fox College, to John and Esther Brougher, Vancouver, May 11, 1970.

Emeritus of George Fox, complimented the Broughers for their faithful giving. He said:

The sense of stewardship before the time -- the leading out ahead of others and putting your pocket book where your mouth was -- was the kind of thing which gave us enough support year after year until others came along. I well recall my using your name and support on many, many instances before responsible groups, the accrediting people, other prospective donors, foundations, corporations, and churches -- and to good effect. The "seed money", which was significant in itself over the years must be seen in its true light as reproducing itself many times over. I am convinced that the later gifts of Shambaugh, Calder, and Edwards can all be traced to your steady faithful, substantial gifts."<sup>34</sup>

The College honored the Brougher's by naming the new science hall after them in 1947.<sup>35</sup>

John served on the board at George Fox for thirty years and at Cascade for thirty years as well. Even though Cascade was forced to close due to lack of funds, the Brougher's contributions to that school prompted Cascade to name one of their buildings, Brougher Hall, in their honor. In 1954, the Brougher's contributions set up an annual scholarship fund for pre-medical students at George Fox. Later, in 1968, John and Esther established an endowed scholarship fund for international students in the name of their late daughter, Joanne.<sup>36</sup>

John was fascinated with the study of history throughout his lifetime. His interests led him to support museums and to work to preserve historical landmarks. He also maintained a collection of medical antiques, about which he wrote several articles for publication.

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<sup>34</sup>Milo Ross to John Brougher.

<sup>35</sup>Office of College Relations, "Dr. John C. Brougher Dies".

<sup>36</sup>Distinguished Service Award Citation, p. 2.



His historical interests led him to join the Fort Vancouver Historical Society.

In 1959 John became president of the Fort Vancouver Historical Society, a title he held for fourteen years. One of his first acts as president was to set up a long-range program to spur interest in the organization's project to save and identify important areas in the early life of the Pacific Northwest region.<sup>37</sup> John led the Society in a crusade to save historical buildings and to place and replace historical markers throughout the countryside. Before John became president of the Historical Society, board meetings were held once every three months and the chief function of the organization was a salmon bake once a year. He pushed for meetings once a month and increased the number of projects that the Society was involved in. Perhaps the most tangible result of John's influence on the Society was its growth from a group of 68 to a group of more than 600 during his presidency.<sup>38</sup>

John's major achievement during his fourteen year term as president was the creation of the Vancouver Historical Society Museum. He saw the foundation of a museum in Vancouver as a worthy goal for the Society and worked hard to accomplish this objective. The city donated the old city library for this purpose and the Society began the hard work of putting in display cases and shelving as well as assembling the artifacts. The museum was completed mostly due to John's hard work and inspiration to the workers. As his Esther said, "People

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<sup>37</sup>Warren J. Brier, "Dr. Brougher is "Mr. History" in Vancouver", The Seattle Times, February 17, 1963, p. 11.

<sup>38</sup>"Brougher Named Museum Curator, "George Fox College Life, February, 1977.

just wanted to work for John because he worked right beside them."<sup>39</sup>

John's interest in the preservation of history led him to personally finance the painting of oil portraits of well-known figures in Clark County's past. He did considerable research to obtain photographs and drawings of the personalities, consulting historical agencies as far away as London. He even went so far as to write the widow of the late General George C. Marshall, in order to obtain the general's correct coloring.<sup>40</sup> The paintings were given to the museum and are hanging there today.

One of John's side interests was the establishment of a museum at George Fox College. He helped to get it started by donating his own collection of medical antiques and assembling assorted memorabilia from the College. The museum grew over the years to contain artifacts from Friends missionary efforts in South America as well as pioneer and Quaker materials. Also included is the extensive Bess Bulgin Crystal and Mineral Collection donated in 1978.<sup>41</sup> This valuable mineral collection would not have been donated to the College without John's persistent efforts. Bess Bulgin had refused to donate the collection until display cases were built to show it. John had the cases built and the collection was donated.<sup>42</sup>

It is a tribute to the life of John Brougher that although he did not seek honors and awards, he was bestowed with many. He was designated as a member of the Governor's Advisory Council on the

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<sup>39</sup>Interview with Esther Brougher.

<sup>40</sup>Brier, p. 11.

<sup>41</sup>"A New Name, a New Home", George Fox College Life, August, 1983.

<sup>42</sup>Interview with Esther Brougher.



State of Washington's Observance of the Civil War Centennial in 1961. He was presented with a Distinguished Service Award by George Fox College in 1970. In 1973, he was honored by the Vancouver Chamber of Commerce for his service as president of the Fort Vancouver Historical Society. In the same year he was given an honorary Doctor of Letters degree by George Fox College. Finally, he was given an Alumni Citation Award by Willamette University for outstanding achievement.<sup>43</sup> These are the official awards that were granted to John Brougher. He received more acclaim through the praise and gratitude of his professional associates, former patients and many close friends.

John Brougher passed away at his home in Friendsview Manor in Newberg on January 6, 1983. The qualities that he exemplified throughout his lifetime demonstrated a strong commitment to God, to his wife Esther, and to a faithful Christian stewardship of his talents and resources. He was clearly, "a busy man who has spent himself in the service of mankind with refreshing optimism."<sup>44</sup> More than the thousands of patients he served, more than the amount of time and money he gave to missions, George Fox College or historical preservation, John should be honored and remembered for the consistency with which he gave God first place in his life. There are few individuals who are blessed with the talents that John possessed, but there are fewer still who will give of these talents wholly and completely to be used by God.

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<sup>43</sup>"Obituary Information: John C. Brougher", Attrell Funeral Chapels, January, 1983.

<sup>44</sup>Doc. Cit., p. 2.

A fitting memorial to the life of John Brougher was articulated by J. Earl Geil, one of his former pastors, in a letter written in 1970. In recounting John's life he said:

"So, while there is a time to work in obstetrics and gynecology, a time for gardening and relaxation, a time for lapidary and historical museums, a time for George Fox College and foreign missions, over and above all these, there has been first and foremost, time for God."<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> J. Earl Geil to John Brougher, Vancouver, May 13, 1970, personal files of Esther Brougher.



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## NEWS

Office of College Relations  
Newberg, Oregon 97132  
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Jan. 6, 1983

### DR. JOHN C. BROUGHER DIES

Dr. John C. Brougher, who had a long and extensive association with George Fox College, died Thursday, Jan. 6, in Newberg.

Dr. Brougher had been the college's museum curator since 1977, establishing the first full museum on the Newberg campus. Located in Shambaugh Library, the museum features early Newberg and Quaker materials. It was a product of his planning, donations, and organization.

For 30 years from 1946 to 1976, Dr. Brougher was a member of the George Fox Board of Trustees. He continued to serve as an active honorary member.

Brougher Hall, a campus building since 1947, was named for Dr. Brougher and his wife, Esther, who survives.

In 1973 Dr. Brougher was awarded an honorary doctorate by the college, just the 12th awarded in more than 75 years. Earlier, in 1970, he had been given a Distinguished Service Award at a GFC/Newberg Community Banquet.

In 1954 Dr. Brougher and his wife established an annual scholarship program for pre-medical students. In 1968 they established an endowed scholarship fund for international students in the name of their daughter, Joan, now deceased.

Dr. Brougher, who died at the age of 81, was a longtime Vancouver, Wash., physician who established the Vancouver Clinic in 1939. He was in medical practice for more than 50 years. As a physician and surgeon specializing in obstetrics and gynecology, Dr. Brougher delivered more than 10,000 babies. He retired in 1980, moving to Newberg.



Dr. John C. Brougher Dies

1/6/83

Page 2

In 1973 Dr. Brougher was named President Emeritus of the <sup>Fort</sup> ~~Fr.~~ Vancouver Historical Society, after serving as president for 14 years. The same year he was given a special service award from the Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce for his community contributions.

Dr. Brougher had a continuing interest in historical matters. In 1959 he became president of the Fort Vancouver Historical Society and for 14 years guided its growth from a membership of 68 to more than 600. In that time the society built a museum that became a major cultural development for Southwest Washington. Dr. Brougher was a member of the Washington State American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, appointed by Gov. Dan Evans. Dr. Brougher had a personal collection of antiques, rock specimens and photography in his home.

Dr. Brougher was a charter member of the First Friends Church in Vancouver and served as, a presiding officer, Sunday School teacher and church trustee.

A native of LaCenter, <sup>space</sup> Wash<sup>ington</sup>, Dr. Brougher moved to Scotts Mills, Ore. when he was six, <sup>year of age</sup>. He graduated from the Scotts Mills High School in 1919 and Willamette University in 1923. He graduated from the University of Oregon Medical School in 1928, entering medical practice in Vancouver in 1929.

Early in life, Dr. Brougher and his wife vowed to live simply and to give a tithe to church work, including the college. They gradually increased the percentage and amounts as his practice grew.

Their contributions helped area churches, infant mission work of the Oregon (now Northwest) Yearly Meeting of Friends Church in Bolivia, and the Friends Church conference camp ground at Twin Rocks, Oregon.

In its doctoral citation for Dr. Brougher the college cited him as "a busy man who has spent himself in the service of mankind with refreshing optimism."

It said, "he demonstrates a Quaker concern for using one's gifts to the glory



Dr. John C. Brougher Dies

1/6/83

Page 3

of God, accepting the beauty of the earth and loving its creatures."

George Fox interim president William D. Green said: "Few people in the history of the college have done more for it than Dr. John Brougher. He has been one of the most generous of all donors, and over the years has maintained a loving concern for the institution and its welfare."

Green added: "It is said that in his medical practice he delivered more than 10,000 babies. One wonders how many young scholars he made possible through his generous giving and living."

Service arrangements are pending.