

1-1-2010

Front Matter -- Quaker Religious Thought, no. 115

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Recommended Citation

Anderson, Paul (2010) "Front Matter -- Quaker Religious Thought, no. 115," *Quaker Religious Thought*. Vol. 115, Article 1.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/qrt/vol115/iss1/1>

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QUAKER RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

“His Power and Spirit in Their Hearts”—
Quaker Spiritual Direction 5

Barbara S. Worden

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Corey Beals

Cumulative No. 115
December 2010

QUAKER RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

Cumulative Number 115

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Sponsored by the Quaker Theological Discussion Group

(<http://theo-discuss.quaker.org/>)

The purpose of the Quaker Theological Discussion Group is to explore the meaning and implications of our Quaker faith and religious experience through discussion and publication. This search for unity in the claim of truth upon us concerns both the content and application of our faith.

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Quaker Religious Thought is published two times each year; the Volume numbers were discontinued after Vol. 30 in 2002, continuing with the issue # system only since 2003, beginning with #s 99 & 100.

Send all business and subscription matters to:

Quaker Religious Thought

c/o Phil Smith, Religion Department,
George Fox University, Newberg, OR 97132

Subscription rates:

Individuals/meetings — per year \$16, two years \$30

Students — per year \$12; Institutional libraries — per year \$20

Lifetime subscription \$300-500

European distribution:

Friends Book Centre

Euston Road, London, NW1 2BJ, England

International Standard Serial Number 0033-5088

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This issue features three types of essays. Barbara Worden leads off with a treatment of spiritual direction from a Quaker perspective; I believe Friends have much to contribute to this field, and this essay points us in the right direction. This, of course, is just one of several ways this topic can be explored, and I hope further advances into the field of spirituality from a Quaker perspective will be forthcoming. Friends have a lot to say on this subject!

The second part of the issue features two essays on leading Quaker interpreters in the 20th century—Howard Brinton and Jack Willcuts. Anthony Manousos is working on a book-length project on Howard Brinton’s considerable contribution to Friends, and his essay here is an advance on that good work. He also is organizing a conference to be held at Pendle Hill in mid June (see the end of his essay), so interested persons should take note of that event and try to attend. Given the formidable contribution Brinton has made to the identity formation of American unprogrammed Friends, I invited a treatment of Jack Willcuts, who has played a similar role among evangelical Friends, and Arthur Roberts was kind enough to contribute such an essay. Presented together, coming to appreciate these two leading interpreters of Quakerism provides an excellent understanding of the best of American Quaker apologists on different sides of the spectrum. While neither of them played a major role in Quaker Theological Discussion Group, nor are their Quaker works primarily academic, they certainly have played major roles in forming the religious identities of American Friends over the last several decades.

As I thought about the recent republishing of Brinton’s book, *Friends for 350 Years* (Wallingford: Pendle Hill, 2002) a half century after its original publication, another parallel came to mind, namely Walter Williams’ *The Rich Heritage of Quakerism*. When I was reading it for Hugh Barbour’s Quakerism class at ESR three decades ago, alongside Brinton’s work (and those of Vipont, Russel, Elliot, Trueblood, Brayshaw, and Barbour and Roberts), it struck me that it was out of print and should be gotten back into print. As Williams’ work is highly apologetic and needed some updating, one question was whether to revise it as a new edition or whether to leave it as it was and to simply introduce corrections in an appendix. In working with the Williams family, they felt his work should be allowed to stand

on its own (for better and for worse), and that judgment is a worthy one. Therefore, in my 40-page epilogue (Newberg: Barclay Press, 1987), I sought to update the book and amend some of its excesses. When Margaret Hope Bacon contacted me about the revision of Brinton's book, I explained my approach to Williams' text, and she and the publications committee decided to approach Brinton's text in a similar way. They left the text largely as it stands, but added a new introduction, an update, and a few pages of line notes at the end of the book; corrections and language adjustments are thus made nonintrusively. The two essays in this issue of *QRT* by Manousos and Roberts help us appreciate the lives and contributions of two leading Quaker interpreters, assisting also our understanding for the sectors of Quakerism they have influenced.

The third part of this issue features responses by Jeffrey Dudiak and Corey Beals, who engage the responses by Richard Wood and Rachel Muers in *QRT* #114 to their earlier essays on Levinas and Quakers, appearing in *QRT* #113. Here we have some "thinking about" Quakerism and the life with God (ie. *theology*) on a pretty high level. In reading their measured words and insightful approaches to the spiritual life and its implications we are catapulted into new levels of reflection and reminded of how much we do not know.

Happy reading, and thinking, and doing, and being!

—*Paul Anderson*
Editor

PS Remember the Brinton conference at Pendle Hill June 15-16; we will be holding a Quaker Theological Discussion Group meeting in San Francisco Friday, November 18, 2011 at the AAR/SBL meetings. More on that in the next issue!