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HOWARD BRINTON AS A THEOLOGIAN AND APOLOGIST FOR "REAL QUAKERISM"

ANTHONY MANOUSOS

A critical understanding of 20th century Quaker theology would be incomplete without assessing the contribution of Howard Brinton, whose works helped create the theological framework for modern liberal Quakerism. Given the importance and stature of the Brintons, I felt some trepidation about undertaking the daunting task of writing the first book-length biography about them. Fortunately, I had access to Howard Brinton's unpublished autobiography, dictated to Yuki Brinton a year before his death in 1973, as well as to the Brinton archives at Haverford College and to his family and friends, who have been very supportive. But the lack of secondary material about the Brintons has made my scholarly efforts extremely challenging. As Ben Pink Dandelion, of Woodbrooke, has observed, Quakerism, and particular 20th century Quaker theology, is "vastly under-researched."¹

Ironically, Brinton, one of the most important Quaker theologians of the 20th century, was never trained as a theologian. When he did his undergraduate work at Haverford College, he majored in mathematics and physics, but he did feel drawn to religion and philosophy. The teacher at Haverford who exerted the most influence on his young impressionable mind was Rufus Jones. It was Jones who led Brinton to pursue his interest in philosophy and to study the works of the German mystic Jacob Boehme (the subject of Brinton's doctoral dissertation). With Jones' encouragement, Brinton went on to earn a degree in philosophy at Harvard University, where he studied with such giants as William James, George Santayana and Josiah Royce. But during the first twenty years of his teaching career, Brinton taught math and physics, albeit with many references to religion and philosophy. As one of his students at Earlham noted, Brinton had a unique approach to teaching physics: "Howard enriched his discussion of Newton's laws, Faraday's discoveries, and the predictions of Einstein by making cross references to philosophers and theologians and their concepts."²

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Brinton married Anna Cox and earned his Ph.D. in philosophy from Berkeley, after which he was given the opportunity to teach philosophy and religion at Earlham College. He began this new phase of teaching in 1925, when he was 41 years old. It wasn't until 1933, when he became director of Pendle Hill, that Brinton had the opportunity to devote himself full-time to teaching Quaker theology. By then he was nearly fifty.

During the next fifteen years, Howard devoted himself full-time to teaching Quakerism as it had never been taught before. Pendle Hill was an experimental school that attempted to apply Quaker principles to education. During this intense period with its very sharp learning curve, Brinton created a whole new approach to Quaker pedagogy as well as well as a framework for Quaker theology.

Brinton's training as a scientist and philosopher shaped the way he thought about theology as well as the way he taught this subject. He saw Quakerism as an "experimental" religion in an almost scientific sense; and this approach had a strong appeal to liberal Friends, many of whom shared his scientific background.

Brinton was also influenced by the theological conflicts that were taking place between evangelical/fundamentalist and liberal Friends, which he experienced on a personal level. He came from a "mixed" background—his mother was a Hicksite Friend and his father Orthodox. His wife Anna descended from Joel and Hannah Bean, who were disowned from Iowa Yearly Meeting after it was taken over by revivalist evangelicals. Until Brinton became director of Pendle Hill, he taught mainly at schools run by pastoral Friends, whose approach to Quakerism was radically different from his own.

Howard's first important theological writings—*Vocal Ministry and Quaker Worship* (1928) and *Creative Worship* (1931)—were written while Howard was in his forties. As their titles imply, they focus on what Howard considered to be the distinctive core of Quakerism: unprogrammed worship and its philosophical implications. These works also lay the foundation for Howard's theological perspective and his effort to reconcile Quakerism and science and to address the urgent spiritual needs of 20th century society.

In his second phase (1943-1952), Brinton took on a more ambitious aim: to educate modern Friends (especially newcomers to Quakerism) in the theory and practice of Quakerism. During this period, he wrote two classic works that are essentially didactic: *Guide*

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to *Quaker Practice* (1943) and *Friends for 300 Years* (1952). These works arose out of Brinton’s experience as a teacher of Quakerism at Pendle Hill and were intended to help Friends understand the theological basis for unprogrammed worship and to practice their faith based on such worship. These works were written when Howard was in his sixties and at the peak of his powers as a writer and thinker.

In the final phase of Howard’s theological journey—a period of retrospection and reflection—he wrote *Friends for 75 Years* (1960), *Quaker Journals: Varieties of Religious Experiences among Friends* (1972) and *The Religious Philosophy of Quakerism* (1973). As the following sales figures indicate, Howard’s major works, *Friends for Three Hundred Years* (1952) and *Guide to Quaker Practice* (1945), remain top sellers among unprogrammed Friends in the United States even after more than fifty years, inviting reflection.

Sales figures for 2008	FGC bookstore
Ben Pink Dandelion <i>Short Intro to Quakerism</i> (2008)	340
Howard Brinton <i>Friends for 300 Years</i> (1952)	240
Michael Birkel <i>Silence and Witness</i> (2004)	174
Howard Brinton <i>Guide to Quaker Practice</i>	105
Ben Pink Dandelion <i>Intro to Quakerism</i> (2008)	103
Patricia Williams <i>Quakerism: A Theology for Our Times</i> (2007)	70
John Punshon <i>Portrait in Grey</i> (1984)	70
Elton Trueblood <i>A People Called Quakers</i> (1960)	6

These figures confirm Brinton’s popularity among liberal Friends, if not Chuck Fager’s observation that “Howard Brinton’s stature as a preeminent Quaker scholar and religious thinker of the twentieth century continues to grow, and rightly so, while other once-prominent names slip further into obscurity.”³ Thomas Hamm called Brinton “one of the most influential Friends of the twentieth century.”⁴ Yet even though *Friends for 300 Years* has become a classic, and has sold around 30,000 thousand copies since 1965, and probably nearly that many from 1953-65, there has never been a serious study of this work. This lack of a critical assessment is truly astounding, given the fact that most Quakers are highly educated people who are quite critical

in matters other than theology. The only critical assessment of *Friends for 300 Years* is a book review written in 1953 by L. Hugh Doncaster, who agreed with F.B. Tolles's laudatory assessment that Brinton's work is "the closest thing this Quaker generation has produced—or is likely to produce—to Robert Barclay's great *Apology*."⁵

Comparing *Friends for 300 Years* to Barclay's *Apology* is the highest praise that a Quaker could bestow since Barclay's work, written in the 17th century, could be considered the *summa theologica* of Quakerdom. While many contemporary Quaker theologians would dispute whether Brinton's work deserves such an accolade, Howard himself makes it clear that *Friends for Three Hundred Years* was intended to be an "apology," or a formal defense, of what he viewed as authentic Quakerism. Howard cites as the two most important sources for his work George Fox's pastoral epistles and Barclay's *Apology*.

Published in Latin in 1676, and in English in 1678, Barclay's *Apology* was a systematic defense of Quakerism against its various opponents, from the Calvinists to the Socinians. Unlike many Quaker polemicists, Barclay provided a learned and well-reasoned treatment of key theological issues such the Inward Light, scripture, Man's fallen condition, justification, perfection, ministry, worship, baptism, communion and Quakerism's relationship to society and government. In his introduction to *Friends for 300 Years*, Howard says that Barclay's *Apology* "affords the most complete interpretation we have of Quakerism *as thought about*."⁶

Friends for 300 Years defends unprogrammed Quakerism against contemporary non-Quaker opponents, such as Neo-Calvinism and fundamentalism, and also against forms of Quakerism (such as evangelicalism) that Howard felt had distorted George Fox's original message and mission. Howard dealt with many of the same issues as Barclay: the authority of Scripture, conscience vs. the Light Within, the role of reason, the universality of the Light, Christology (the Eternal Christ and the historic Jesus), Man's Responsibility for Good and Evil, Perfectionism, the Fall of Man, and the Relation between the Divine and Human. Unlike Barclay, Howard examined the contentious issue of the Atonement, which had been one cause of the division between American Friends in the nineteenth century. Howard, like Barclay, both defended and explained Quaker doctrines logically and clearly so that Friends could understand the rational basis of their faith and enter into a theological discussion/debate with other Christians.

Howard understood perhaps better than any of his contemporaries the need to educate Friends about theology. The paucity of critical reflection about Quaker religious thought on the part of many modern Friends can partly be explained by Quakerism's long-standing aversion to "theologizing"—turning reflections on religious experiences into what George Fox called "notions." For this reason, explained Howard with more than a trace of irony, he used the word "Christian thought" rather than "Christian theology" in the title of an essay published in 1959 because "while many Friends shy away from theology, we do not, or least we do not profess to, shy away from thought."

Brinton cites as a positive development the establishment of the Quaker Theological Discussion Group, which publishes a journal called *Quaker Religious Thought*. As Punshon explains:

In the United States in 1957 a number of Quakers from across the Society's divides, scholars and practical people, came together to set up the Quaker Theological Discussion Group. It was not a campaigning organization but a forum at which the cooperative task of thinking through the renewal of the Society could be undertaken. At its annual gatherings and in the pages of the many issues of *Quaker Religious Thought*, the dialogue between Quaker has continued. Most shades of opinion have been expressed, and through it one can come to grips with the constructive thinking of nearly all the finest minds of the period.⁷

Brinton was part of this theological revival. The first issue of *Quaker Religious Thought* (Spring, 1959) contains an essay by Brinton entitled "The Quaker Doctrine of the Holy Spirit." This essay is followed by responses from three leading Quaker thinkers of this period: Lewis Benson, Thomas S. Brown, and Charles F. Thomas. Brinton is given the chance to respond to his critics and to have the last word. More will be said about this exchange later.

The aversion to theology among unprogrammed Friends stems in part from the pain caused by the Hicksite-Orthodox separation and the other schisms of the 19th century, but its persistence to the present day is puzzling. As Brinton makes clear on numerous occasions, Robert Barclay and William Penn were deeply involved in the theological and philosophical debates of their times, and George Fox had a passionate concern for theological matters despite a lack of formal training.

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But these Friends and their successors were suspicious of theologizing not based upon a direct, immediate and felt experience of Spirit. Today many unprogrammed Friends confuse theology with a creed (the former are religious reflections by individuals within a religious group, while the latter often functions as a requirement for membership in the group). Creeds help to bring cohesion to a religious group, but they can also create an “us” vs. “them” attitude that liberal Friends find repellant. Theological debate may be divisive, but it may also foster understanding and respect if those who disagree agree to disagree agreeably. (This is sometimes called irenic theology.)

Friends often lacked the training to engage in meaningful theological dialogue. Because seminary training was not a requirement for Quaker ministry during its first hundred and fifty years, and was indeed seen as suspect, many early Friends were ignorant of the theological trends of their day. Even Howard confesses that because his training was in science and philosophy, he sometimes felt disadvantaged when discussing theology at ecumenical gatherings.

This attitude toward theology shifted somewhat in the nineteenth century when Friends adopted the system of paid pastors, who required some form of training in theology and the Bible. Quaker schools like Earlham, Guilford, Haverford, Bryn Mawr and Swarthmore offered courses in religion and some outstanding Quaker scholars emerged, like Rufus Jones and Henry Cadbury. But for the most part, recorded ministers in unprogrammed Meetings had little or no formal training in religion or systematic theology. Earlham School of Religion opened its doors in 1960.

Howard’s work at Pendle Hill in the 1930s and 1940s was an attempt to help educate unprogrammed Friends who felt called to ministry, or to live their Quaker faith authentically. During this period Howard became aware of how important it was to provide guidance for these eager but inexperienced newcomers to Quakerism. With this group in mind, Howard wrote a *Guide to Quaker Practice* (1945), which ended up having a broad appeal. As he explained in his introduction, “This Guide, originally written largely with new Friends’ meetings in mind, but also met a considerable need in older meetings. It has been found to be useful not only as an aid to the instruction of new members but also as a reminder to older members of the character and significance of certain practices which at first sight may seem based only on tradition and custom.”⁸ Howard’s purpose

was to encourage Friends to reflect more deeply about the theological underpinnings of Quaker practices and procedures.

THE "DISCOVERY" OF THE QUAKER TESTIMONIES ON SIMPLICITY, PEACE/HARMONY, COMMUNITY AND HARMONY

Howard's *Guide to Quaker Practice* (1945) has gone through numerous reprints and has been a staple of First-Day classes for nearly sixty years. Howard's recommendations for business meeting, First Day school, vocal ministry, and other Quaker practices are expressed with such clarity, and with such a sense of authority, that they have been incorporated into Quaker books of discipline and become "standard operating procedure" among many unprogrammed Friends.

Although Howard does not address doctrinal matters, this guidebook reflects theological convictions expressed in his earlier writings, as Howard himself admits: "Practice presupposed belief. For this reason the determining principles of the Society of Friends must be kept constantly in mind."⁹ Howard's basic theological conviction—what he considers the core of Quakerism—is that Truth or the Divine can be experienced both individually and corporately through unprogrammed meeting for worship and that this method of worship is the defining characteristic of Quakerism. As he attempts to show in this guidebook, every Quaker practice can be traced to this underlying principle.

Perhaps the most important innovation in this work is its systematization of the Quaker social "testimonies." A testimony is defined by Pacific Yearly Meeting's *Faith and Practice* as "a public statement or witness based on beliefs of the Society of Friends which give direction to our lives." Interestingly, the word was not widely used in Quaker books of discipline prior to the publication of Howard's pamphlet. Books of disciplines contained "advices" and "queries" and statements of "Christian doctrine," but seldom was there any mention of testimonies (except for the Peace Testimony).

Until the publication of *Guide to Quaker Practice*, there was no consensus about Friends' social testimonies. For example, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting *Christian Doctrine, Practice and Discipline* (1871) includes a series of "advices" on war, slavery, oath taking, national fasts and rejoicings (Quakers should not take part in them), burials

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and mourning habits (Quakers should refrain from wearing mourning garments or attending burials since these are vain rituals). Other books of discipline reveal a similar hodgepodge of advices or “testimonies” without any clearly discernible pattern.

Howard surveyed this jumble of advices and distilled them into four distinct and memorable social testimonies—simplicity, peace, community, equality—and one personal testimony (integrity). Howard’s formulation of the five Quaker testimonies has become so commonplace in Quaker religious education that it is often referred to by the acronym, SPICE. These testimonies also frequently appear in books of disciplines among unprogrammed Friends in the United States, particularly in the West. Few Friends realize that Howard “discovered” or “reinvented” the testimonies in 1943.

Howard “discovered” these testimonies in the same way that a scientist discovers a “law” or recurrent pattern in the physical universe. He looked back at the advices and behavior of Friends and saw patterns of behavior springing out of a distinctive way of life and worship. But Howard was not simply being descriptive. He was also arguing for a certain view of Quakerism—one that is rooted in a group mystical experience and aims to transform not only individuals but society. As he explains,

The Society of Friends has never put forth a blueprint of the structure of the ideal society, having the same reluctance in this respect as in putting forth a religious creed. Nevertheless the meeting itself should aim, however short it may come of attaining its ideal, at a pattern of human relations between its own members which could be considered as ideal for society as a whole.¹⁰

Howard relates this “ideal pattern” both to the organic “body of Christ” described in Ephesians 4:16 and also to a “laboratory and a training ground,” thereby appealing both to the scientifically and religiously minded.

The four social testimonies are so well known, and have been discussed at such length among Friends, it is not necessary to say much about them here. It is worth noting that Howard preferred the word *harmony* to *peace* or *pacifism* since the word *pacifism* “has come to mean, for many persons, simply an unwillingness to take part in war.” In Howard’s view, Quakers do more than simply refrain from

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war. They actively engage in a “ministry of reconciliation” that leads to peace and justice through nonviolent means.

Ultimately, Howard’s how-to manual is a call to personal and social transformation. He ends his guidebook on a prophetic note: “The early Friends, like the early Christians, did not try to adjust themselves to the world. Their effort was directed towards adjusting the world and themselves to the standard of their religion.... They characterize a community of persons which seeks, however much it may fail, to obey the scriptural injunction ‘Be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.’”¹¹

FRIENDS FOR 300 YEARS AND THE REVIVAL OF THEOLOGY AMONG FRIENDS

After World War II, Howard embarked on a more ambitious task: explaining the theological basis of modern liberal Quakerism. During this period, Howard also became involved in the formation of the World Council of Churches and in efforts to reunite Hicksite and Orthodox Friends. The World Council was an historic coming-together of Christians from Protestant and Orthodox traditions which led many Friends to venture outside of their Quaker comfort zone and think more deeply about theological concerns affecting the rest of the Christian world.¹² Occasional articles about contemporary theological trends began appearing in the *Friend Intelligencer* in the early 1950s—most notably, by William H. Marwick, a Scottish Friend,¹³ and by William Hordern, a professor of philosophy and religion at Swarthmore College.¹⁴

The World Council of Churches and the ecumenical movement had an especially profound effect on Howard Brinton, obliging him to take more seriously contemporary trends in theology and to try to understand them from a Quaker perspective. Engaging with contemporary theology was one of the purposes of *Friends for 300 Years*.

The larger, deeper purpose of this work was to explain and promote what Howard saw as “real Quakerism.” Many Friends, including myself, when exposed to *Friends for 300 Years* for the first time, imagined they were reading an objective account of Quaker history and thought. This was never Howard’s intention. He had a very clear theological agenda in mind, which will be explained in detail.

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Let's begin by noting that *Friends for 300 Years* was probably commissioned not only because it was the 300th anniversary of Quakerism, but also because the Quakers received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1947 and therefore a book about them was likely to interest general readers. As director of Pendle Hill, Howard had what publishers call a "platform" to promote this book. Howard was seen (quite rightly) as the successor to his well-known and respected teacher Rufus Jones, whose introduction to Quakerism, *The Faith and Practice of the Quakers*, was published 25 years earlier.

Jones's slim but engaging introduction to Quakerism, entitled *The Faith and Practice of the Quakers* (1927), posed questions that still challenge the Religious Society of Friends today:

It is three hundred years since George Fox was born, and the spiritual movement which he inaugurated has been tested by two hundred and seventy-five years. The Quaker Society is still a small body and it presents a seemingly feeble front for the age-long battle of Armageddon. It is a tiny band of labourers for the task of building a spiritual civilization. But this is a matter in which numbers are not the main thing. The vital question, after all, is whether this small religious Society here in the world to-day is a living organ of the Spirit or not? Is it possessed by a live idea? Is it in the way of life? Has it found a forward path towards the new world that is to be build? Is it an expansive, or a waning, power?¹⁵

Friends for 300 Years is Howard's attempt to address these questions and to convince readers of Quakerism's relevance to the post-WWII world.

Howard's contribution to Quaker thought was to present Quakerism not as a system of beliefs, but a methodology. "The endeavor of this book is not to produce a history of Quakerism," wrote Howard in his introduction, "but, by means of historical illustrations, to examine a method." For this reason, *Friends for 300 Years* is not organized chronologically, but thematically, beginning with what Howard regarded as most important methodology of Quakerism: the experience of worship. The first chapter, entitled "To Wait Upon the Lord," describes the how Quakerism arose from silent, unprogrammed worship leading to a direct, mystical encounter with the Divine. Subsequent chapters deal with aspects of that experience ("The Light Within as Experienced" and "The Light Within as

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Thought About”). Four chapters are devoted to how Quakers practice their faith—meeting for worship, decision-making, vocal ministry, and witness in the world. There is a chapter on Quaker history (including the various separations), followed by a final chapter: “Quaker Thought and the Present.”

It is notable that Howard focused on what Quakers *experience* and *do*, rather than on what they *believe*. In contrast, Wilmer Cooper’s introduction to Quakerism, *A Living Faith*, is divided into chapters concerned with doctrines, e.g. Quaker View of God, Quaker Understanding of Christ, etc. Patricia Williams uses a framework similar to Howard’s but begins with theology rather than with religious experience. John Punshon adopts a chronological approach, as does Ben Pink Dandelion.

Howard’s decision to focus on methodology rather than on doctrine was in keeping with his scientific outlook. Throughout the book, Howard used metaphors from science that make it appealing to those trained in this discipline. At the same time, Howard quoted liberally from early Quaker writers whose rich biblical language conveys the passion and power of their religious experiences. In this way, theology (theory) and history (practice) are combined.

Although Howard focused on the practice of Quakerism, he also dealt with crucial issues of Christian doctrine in the chapter called “The Light Within as Thought About.” Howard made it clear at the beginning of this chapter that what unified early Friends was not a common set of beliefs, but a common religious experience that sprung from unprogrammed worship. Even though Howard privileged this experience over theory, he also saw the importance of “consistent system of ideas.” With this in mind, Howard was among the first to present a systematic Quaker theology for the 20th century. He addressed many of the controversial questions that divided Friends from other Christians, and often divided Friends from each other.

- Is the Bible the ultimate source of authority, or the Inward Light, or both?
- What is the difference between conscience and the Inward Light?
- What role does reason play in Quakerism?
- Is the Light universal? Is there a Christian basis for universalism?

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- How do Friends feel about the historical Jesus? What is the Universal Christ?
- What is the Quaker view of the atonement? How has this shaped Quaker attitudes and actions?
- What did Quakers believe about Good and Evil and human responsibility? What about the Fall of Man? Original sin?
- What did Quakers believe about human perfectibility? How do Friends feel about the relation between the Divine and the human?

In addressing these questions, Howard explored historical precedents and explained their relevance to today's world. Another important innovation in Howard's book was his attempt to address the key theological issues of his day, particularly the neo-Calvinist (although most theologians would refer to Barth as "neo-orthodox") theology of Karl Barth. Like Barth, Howard recognized the limitations of liberal optimism and saw some validity in Calvin's dark view of human nature, but he felt that the Neo-Calvinists had gone too far. As L. Hugh Doncaster noted, Howards suggested that "Quaker historians of this century were influenced, perhaps over-influenced, by Hegelian idealism; and that now we are facing the challenge of neo-Calvinism. Between these two stands Barclay, 'pessimistic regarding... 'natural' man's present condition, but optimistic in regard to man's capacity for regeneration and union with God even in this life."

Howard staunchly defended Rufus Jones's view that Quakerism is essentially a mystical religion which differed dramatically from the Puritanism of its day. This view has been challenged by Hugh Barbour and other Quaker historians (such as Henry Cadbury), who Howard felt went too far in their assertions. Howard also saw the evangelical and holiness movement as fundamentally at odds with "real Quakerism." This view has also been challenged by evangelical Friends, most recently by Carole Spencer. Certainly, one of the weaknesses of Howard's argument was his reluctance to acknowledge that his view of Quakerism is a minority position. Pastoral and Evangelical Friends were at the forefront of missionary efforts to spread Quakerism in the 19th and 20th centuries, and today only 25% of the world's Quakers are unprogrammed Friends. As Margaret Hope Bacon pointed out, "it is no longer acceptable, as it perhaps was fifty years ago, to write the history of the Society of Friends from the point of view of one's own affiliation."¹⁶

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Even though Howard espoused a liberal, modernist viewpoint, he was open to dialogue with those from other branches of Quakerism. He was part of the modern revival of theological discussion among Quaker academics and became involved with the Quaker Theological Discussion Group at its very inception. In the first issue of *Quaker Religious Thought*, Howard's essay on the "Holy Spirit" was published, along with responses from notable Quaker theologians. This exchange among Friends is worth summarizing to give a flavor of the theological views of this period.

Lewis Benson, a Friend who was passionately Christocentric and later founded the New Foundation movement, argued that Howard overemphasized the "Hellenic" as opposed to Hebrew-Christian side of Quakerism (the Universal Christ Spirit rather than the historic, incarnate Jesus) and did not acknowledge the Trinitarian views of early Friends. Benson, an expert on Fox's writings, cited passages from Fox's work acknowledging the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Brinton responds that while Fox occasionally used this traditional formula, most early Friends did not. Penn and Barclay often referred to the Spirit and to Christ in universalist terms. Howard saw a need for both the universal/impersonal and the particular/personal, and denied that the universal is necessarily "abstract." According to Howard, experiencing the Spirit as a universal, ineffable presence can be as deeply felt as experiencing the Spirit as "I-thou."

Thomas Brown pointed out "the dangers inherent in religion based only on the Spirit within." According to Brown, those who rely only on the "Spirit within" run the risk of pride and "idolatry." Brown also argued for a Trinitarian viewpoint, citing Tillich that the "unity between ultimacy and the concreteness in the living God." Howard responded that early Friends had safeguards against spiritual pride: they relied on group discernment and scripture as a way to test the leadings of the Inward Light. In this respect, they were unlike the Ranters and anarchists of today. Finally, Howard agreed that the Trinity is a "time-honored and suggestive symbol," but argued that God should not be limited to only three ways of presenting himself to human beings. Why not two, or four, or an infinite number?

Speaking on behalf of pastoral Friends, Charles Thomas argued that there is no reason why the Holy Spirit cannot communicate through pre-arranged worship, as in a sermon. Howard responded that while it is possible for the Holy Spirit to communicate through this means, prepared talks on religious matters are best presented before or after a

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Quaker meeting for worship. The distinctive characteristic of Quaker worship is that it offers a unique opportunity for the Holy Spirit to manifest itself spontaneously and without human contrivance. As Howard noted, “A Quaker meeting is a group search for Truth and seedbed in which individual insights may mature and develop. Such a group exercise of worship is a peculiar and difficult undertaking which may fail more often than it succeeds but three centuries of Quaker practice have proved its power and worth.”¹⁷

The first issue of *Quaker Religious Thought* offered a fascinating theological exchange—unlike anything recorded before in a Friends’ publication. It was the beginning of what would prove a lively ongoing dialogue among Friends of different theological perspectives.

For reasons that are unclear, this was the last article by or about Howard Brinton to appear in *QRT* until now. I am grateful that *QRT* is publishing this article and hope it will encourage Quaker scholars and theologians to engage in critical reflection on the Brinton legacy. I am pleased to report that, thanks to Lauri Perman (director of Pendle Hill), scholars will be have an opportunity to present papers about the Brinton at a Brinton symposium scheduled to take place at Pendle Hill on June 15-16, 2011, just prior to the Friends Association of Higher Education Conference at Bryn Mawr College. Paul Lacey, Doug Gwyn, and I will be among the presenters exploring the contribution of the Brintons in the field of theology, education and history. If you would like to give a paper or take part in this gathering, please feel free to contact me at interfaithquaker@aol.com.

CALL FOR PAPERS: THE LEGACY OF HOWARD AND ANNA BRINTON

Pendle Hill is planning a symposium to assess and analyze the achievements of Howard and Anna Brinton, who were directors of Pendle Hill during its formative period (1936-52) and played an important role in the “reinvention” of Quakerism in the 20th century. Thomas Hamm called Howard Brinton “one of the most influential Friends of the twentieth century” and described the Brintons as “the most remarkable Quaker couple since George Fox married Margaret Fell.”

The Brintons made significant contributions in multiple fields: education, theology, and history. Papers are sought that examine their achievements from a variety of critical perspectives. How has

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Howard Brinton, through his promulgation of the "Pendle Hill" idea, influenced Quaker educational thought and practice? How have Brinton's theological ideas, particularly those expressed in his classic works, *Friends for 300 Years*, *Guide to Quaker Practice* and *Quaker Journals*, impacted the Society of Friends both positively and negatively? A classic scholar of distinction, Anna Brinton was a lifelong supporter of the AFSC and served as president of the Friends Historical Association. What contribution to Quaker thought and life did she make in her writings and her work at Pendle Hill?

This symposium will take place June 15-16, 2011, just prior to the Friends Association of Higher Education at Bryn Mawr College. Please submit a 250-word proposal to Anthony Manousos at interfaithquaker@aol.com. Manousos is writing a biography of the Brintons and has published a Pendle Hill pamphlet about them as well as articles in *Quaker Theology* and *The Southern Friend*.

ENDNOTES

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- 2 J. Theodore Peters, "Remembering Howard Brinton," *Quaker Life* (Dec. 1973): 30.
- 3 *Quaker Theology*, Issue 7, 2002. <http://quest.quaker.org/issue7-5-fager.htm>.
- 4 *The Quakers in America*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 67.
- 5 *The Bulletin of the Friends Historical Association*, Vol. 41 (Autumn, 1952, #2): 138.
- 6 *Friends for 350 Years* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Press), xv.
- 7 *Portrait in Grey*, (London: Quaker Home Service, 1984), 255.
- 8 *Guide to Quaker Practice* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Press, 1945), 5.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 7.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 56.
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- 12 *Quaker Theology*, (Spring/Summer 2010).
- 13 "Some Current Trends in Theology" by William H. Marwick, *Friends Intelligencer* (Tenth Month, 11, 1952): 583.
- 14 "Modern Trends in Theology," *Friends Intelligencer* (Fifth Month, 2, 1952): 249.
- 15 Rufus Jones, *The Faith and Practice of the Quakers*, (Methuen: London, 1927): 13.
- 16 *Friends for 350 Years*, viii.
- 17 *Quaker Religious Thought*, 1 (1959): 24.