



HEAVEN ON EARTH:

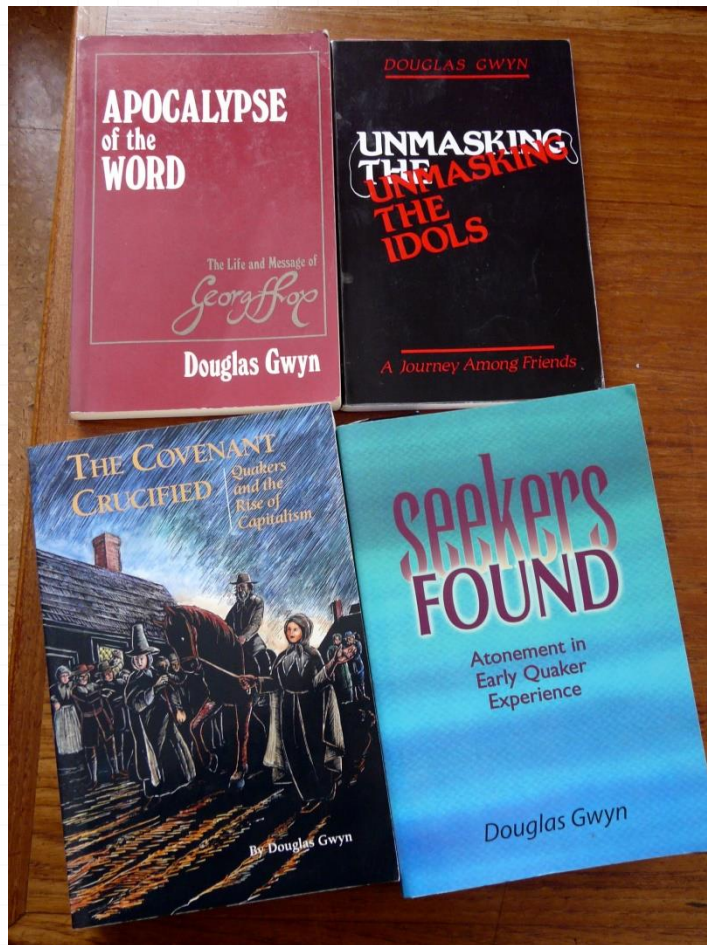
Friends and the Second Coming

**Eve Schmitz-Hertzberg and Sherita Clark
visit Pendle Hill,
a Quaker Study, Retreat and Conference
Center in Wallingford, Pennsylvania
for short term program November 17-21,
2013**

How we decided to go:

Sherita attended Canadian Yearly Meeting in August as a delegate of Yonge Street Monthly Meeting. I also attended, but only for two days. The CYM Quaker Bible Study Monday to Friday was given by Ben Pink Dandelion. We were very inspired by what he had to contribute and the manner in which he enlivened the topic: *Reclaiming a Prophetic Voice*.

At CYM Ben Pink Dandelion ended his talk, which could be viewed as an historical overview of Quaker history and theology, with a call to Friends to think what it means for us today to have a prophetic voice. He said the Quakers still have the prophetic voice and need to reclaim it. We may still experience personal transformation in order to act as agents of transforming the world with God's help.



In my library of Quaker books are four books by Douglas Gwyn. I had met Doug in the early 1980's when he was participating in the New Foundation Seminars at Camp NeeKauNis. I have found his books very insightful and illuminating and I was interested in hearing him speak.

Since I had only been able to participate in the first two days of Ben Pink Dandelion's talk at CYM, I felt I had missed the essential message he was bringing Quakers for the present time. Sherita and I saw that a Fall short-term program was being offered at Pendle Hill in November titled *Heaven on Earth: Quakers and the Second Coming*. It was to be given by Doug Gwyn and Ben Pink Dandelion with Deborah Shaw as spiritual elder/support.

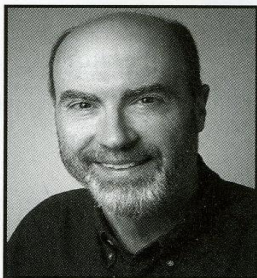
We asked Yonge Street Meeting for support and also Education and Outreach Committee (E&O, formerly HMAC) of Canadian Yearly Meeting.

HEAVEN ON EARTH

Friends and the Second Coming

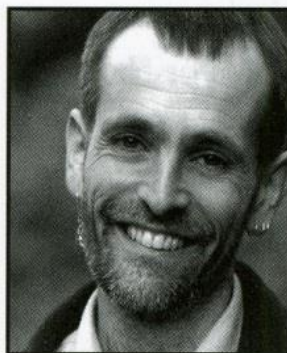
A short course with Ben Pink Dandelion, Doug Gwyn, and Deborah Shaw

Early Friends experienced and practiced “the end of the world,” Christ’s return, as an unfolding present in English society. But after decades of backlash and persecution, they were forced to reframe their experience and practices. This course will look at early Quaker apocalyptic spirituality and politics, and how early Friends reclaimed the message of Jesus and Paul. We will then look at Quaker history as a series of revisions, each suggesting how heaven and earth come together. In 2013, as Friends live into the end of a different “world,” what can the early Quaker vision teach us? How do we experience and practice heaven on earth today?



Doug Gwyn is the Quaker Studies teacher at Pendle Hill. A Quaker pastor and a scholar of early Quakerism, Doug travels widely among Friends as a teacher. Doug

has written several books and articles on early Friends, including *Seekers Found: Atonement in Early Quaker Experience* and *The Covenant Crucified: Quakers and the Rise of Capitalism*. With Ben Pink Dandelion and Timothy Peat, he co-authored *Heaven on Earth: Quakers and the Second Coming*.



Ben Pink Dandelion

of Pendle Hill Area Meeting (England), works at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre and directs the Centre for Postgraduate Quaker

Studies at the University of Birmingham. His writings on Quakerism include both academic and devotional works. Fifteen years ago, he co-authored *Heaven on Earth: Quakers and the Second Coming* with Doug Gwyn and Timothy Peat.

Deborah Shaw

is assistant director of Friends Center and director of the Quaker Leadership Scholars Program at Guilford College. She is a recorded minister of Friendship Meeting in Greensboro (NC), North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative). Deborah served that yearly meeting and the Pendle Hill Board as clerk.





We drove the 828 kilometers to Pendle Hill. The Pennsylvania Turnpike was quite an experience in the November dark. We had to be on the watch for deer who were behaving strangely as it was hunting season.

The Pendle Hill campus is a beautiful place consisting of 19 buildings on 23 acres with over 140 species of trees. It is a diverse environment of woods, lawns, ponds, organic gardens and meadows. The understory of the trees has many Japanese maple trees that were at the height of their fall colour when we were there. Sherita and I enjoyed walking the campus between lectures.



Organic gardens and greenhouse





We were billeted in Waysmeet house in a lovely, modest room.



We ate in Main House and were served simple, organic food that was from the garden or locally sourced. The cook and kitchen help were very proud of their offerings. The views out the windows in the dining room were beautiful.



Each morning the whole community met for Meeting for Worship in the Meeting Room in the Barn. Our sessions were held in Upmeads House. There were 20 participants and the three workshop leaders.



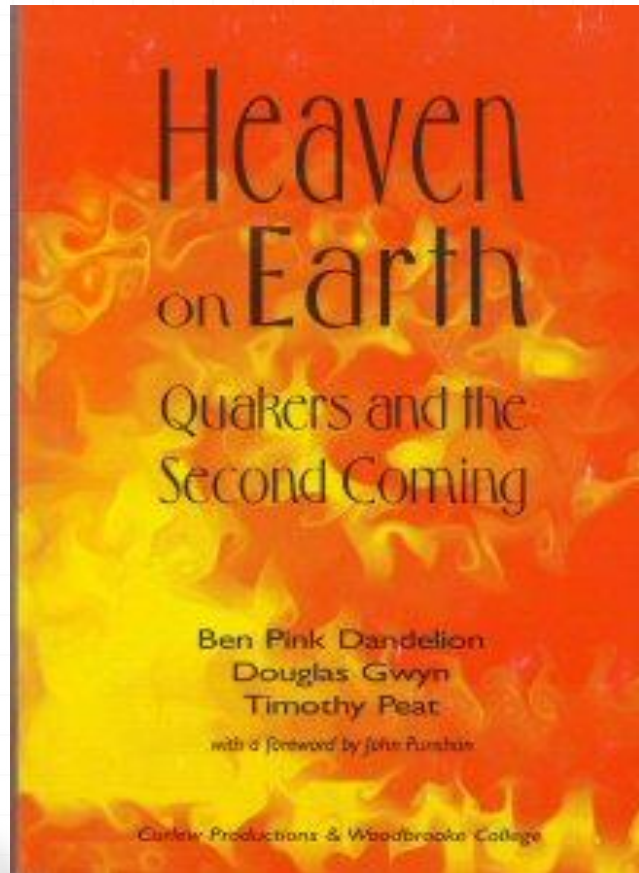
Meeting for Worship in the Barn







Ben Pink Dandelion, Douglas Gwyn and Timothy Peat (Ashworth) had worked together on the topic and book *Heaven on Earth, Quakers and the Second Coming* in 1998. Our short course is part of a revisiting of this topic in England and North America which is very important for the authors in their continuing work understanding the Quakers.

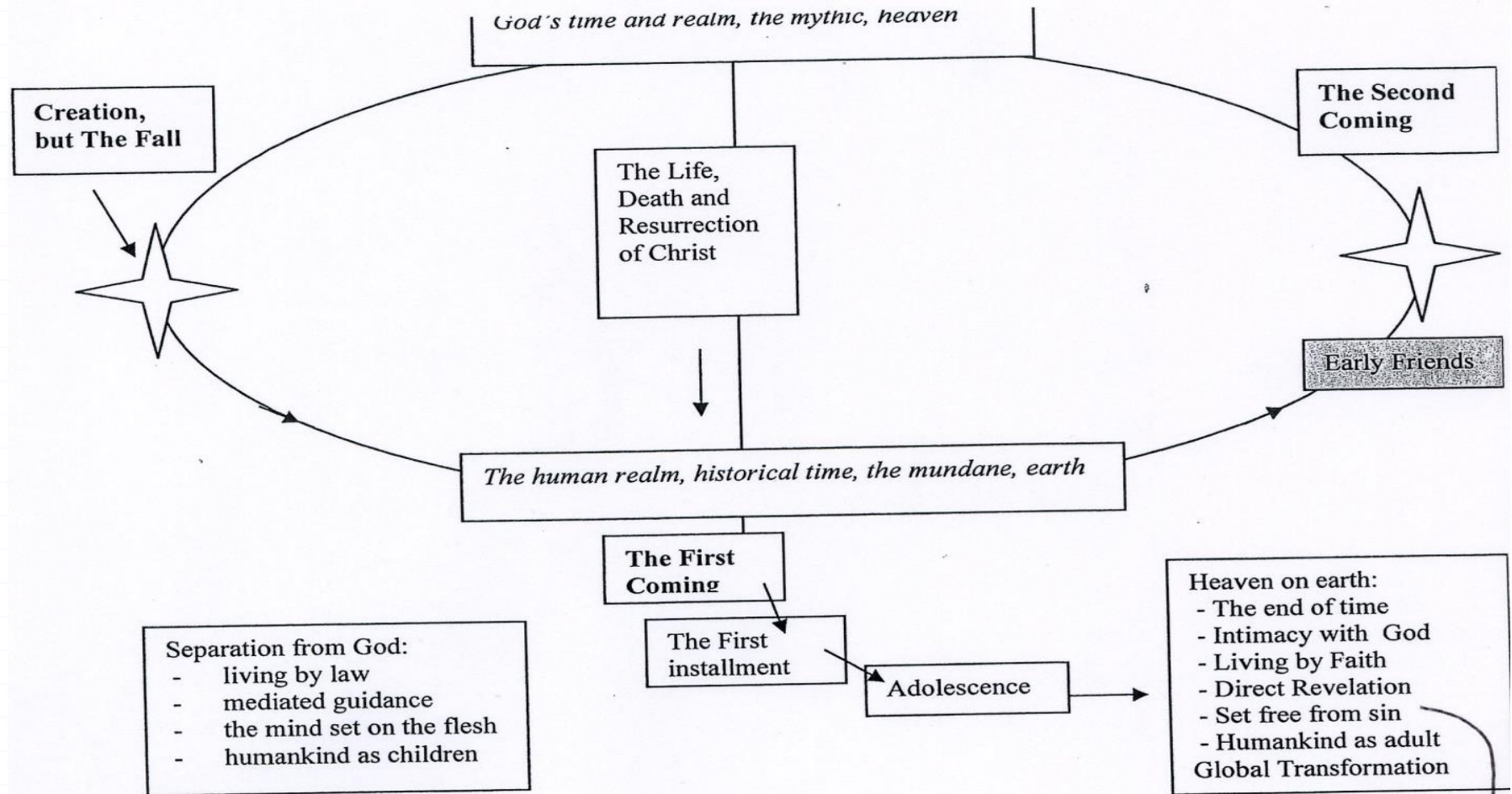


The discussion topics were shared between Ben Pink Dandelion and Douglas Gwyn. They were as follows:

- o The New Faith
- o Longing for Transformation
- o Convincement and Guidance
- o The Lamb's War: early Quaker spirituality and witness as apocalyptic
- o 1666 and all that: from endtime to meantime to Quakerism as we know it
- o Quaker meantime
- o Quaker nowtime
- o Different Endings; New Horizons

The New Faith

This schematic diagram (also shown to us at CYM) represents the new faith of early Friends. It represents **God's plan for the world**. It indicates the separation of God and humankind at the Fall. When Christ came the first time, Heaven came to earth with the promise that Heaven and earth will be reunited in the endtime at the Second Coming. The early Friends thought the Second Coming had arrived. Man was no longer waiting in the meantime but was now at the endtime.



Longing for Transformation

Doug Gwyn spoke about Jesus and Paul the Apostle and his longing for transformation. Early Friends were reclaiming the teachings of Jesus and Paul.

The endtime or the Second Coming was to bring a new transforming intimacy with God.

BECOMING HEIRS
OF THE REIGN OF GOD

INHERITING
THE REIGN OF GOD

FLESH

SPIRIT

'THE MIND SET
ON THE FLESH'
'THE SIN'

DEATH
CONDEMNED ...
TO MORTALITY
'PHYSICAL WEAKNESS
AND WEAKNESS OF WILL'

LAW
LIVING BY MEDIATED
AUTHORITY

HUMANKIND AS 'CHILD'

←

→

THE
TIME
OF
'THE
CHURCH'

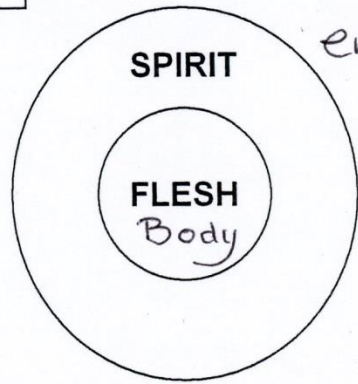
*Liturgy as a
form of worship,
what will be*

'JUSTIFIED'
'RIGHTEOUSED'
'MADE RIGHT'

←

→

? PRESENT TIME
HUMANKIND AS
'ADOLESCENT' ?



LIFE
SET FREE ...
TO DO RIGHT

FAITH
LIVING BY 'UNMEDIATED'
AUTHORITY

*no more temple - all will
become priests.*

HUMANKIND AS 'ADULT'

Beginning time

transition

end time

at Tim. Arhonor

The church was there to help with the meantime until humankind was mature enough to live with Heaven on Earth and the end of the world.

Early Friends thought the time of the church was over as its function was as a temporary institution to help humankind with the meantime or the waiting for the Second Coming of Christ.

Early Quakers mapped their experience onto scripture and the Book of Revelation was central to their understanding. For the early Friends, the essence was the apocalyptic message. In other words, a revelation or taking away of the veil to show reality or the ultimate destiny.

Doug Gwyn and Ben Pink Dandelion gave a short précis of early Friends' experience. Early Friends felt that they had the whole answer. However after decades of backlash and persecution Friends were forced to see things differently. It was when the Quakers realized that the endtime or the Second Coming was not immediate and they had to go on for more meantime. They saw the need to formulate gospel ordering and the Friend's church. The testimonies also developed. Friends set themselves apart by their behavior and became known as a peculiar people.



In *The Liturgies of Quakerism* Ben Pink Dandelion explores the nature of liturgy within a form of worship based in silence. Tracing the original seventeenth-century Quakers' understanding of the 'liturgy of silence,' and what for them replaced outward forms used in other parts of Christianity, this book explains how early Quaker understandings of 'time,' 'history,' and 'apocalyptic' led to an inward liturgical form.

Quaker “nowtime” is where we are now as the Society of Friends. It is apparent that over the centuries Friends have undergone a series of revisions and different endings.

Now we must seek for new horizons.

Interestingly, Evangelical Friends Church International and Friends United Meeting have a Second Coming statement.

According to Doug Gwyn, Liberal Friend's tradition is a theology on the move. Emphasis on continuing revelation means there are no scriptural or historical checks. Liberal Friends have become a continuously seeking church. What Friends believe is not important because experience is primary. The means to experience in Meeting for Worship is important, but it appears that Liberal Friends have lost the collective sense by too much emphasis on the individual experience.

Wednesday evening we shared a personal inspiration. I shared the Osage orange fruits from the Osage orange trees on the campus that I had found. My message was that the natural world is an important inspiration for me.



I quoted from Walt Whitman:

“There was a child that went forth everyday
And the first object that he looked upon, that
object he became;
And that object became part of him for the day or a
certain part of the day, or for many years or
stretching cycles of years.”

And Psalm 23:

“He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.”

How do we experience and practice Heaven on Earth today?

It is important to study the history of the early Quakers: how they experienced and practiced the end of the world (endtime), how they reclaimed the message of Jesus and Paul the Apostle, and the revisions over time to the early Friends faith.

This is not merely an intellectual or theological exercise.

As Ben Pink Dandelion says:

“As we act as vessels for God’s love acting through us, let us pray and trust we remain faithful people. When we are in that place, we can act with the joy that comes with taking spirituality seriously.”

My visit to Pendle Hill was an intense and wonderful experience. It has opened up an increasing desire to study who Quakers were and are and to apply this to shaping and transforming my spiritual life.



The labyrinth at
Pendle Hill.

Pendle Hill in England



2014 Swarthmore lecturer announced

The 2014 Swarthmore Lecture is to be given by the Quaker author and academic Ben Pink Dandelion and will explore the theme of 'transformation'.

Ben Pink Dandelion explains: 'I use the term "transforming" to refer to how early Quakers were transformed in their spiritual experience, how they tried to transform the world around them, how the tradition has transformed, and how we can be transformed, transform our Meetings today and act as agents of transformation in the world, all of which is what it means to be a Quaker in the world today.'

The lecture will take place during Britain Yearly Meeting Gathering, to be held at the University of Bath from 2 to 9 August 2014.



Open for Transformation: Being Quaker

Nov 2-6, 2014 Pendle Hill

Ben Pink Dandelion and Deborah Shaw

Explore the basics of Quaker faith and practice and discover how they connect with your own spiritual experience. You will find opportunities for worship, discussion, sharing, and questions with fellow seekers and seasoned Quaker leaders. All who seek a solid introduction to Quakerism are welcome.

Leader(s)

Ben Pink Dandelion of Pendle Hill Area Friends Meeting (England), works at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre and directs the Centre for Postgraduate Quaker Studies at the University of Birmingham. His writings on Quakerism include both academic and devotional works.



Deborah Shaw is assistant director of Friends Center and director of the Quaker Leadership Scholars Program at Guilford College. She is a recorded minister of Friendship Friends Meeting in Greensboro (NC), North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative). Deborah served that yearly meeting and the Pendle Hill Board as clerk.

On our way home Sherita and I visited Amber, Sherita's daughter and husband, Ryan in Chatham, New York. We saw their new home.



