

# Neo-evangelical identity within American Religious Society of Friends (Quakers): Oregon Yearly Meeting, 1919-1947

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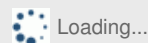
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### Abstract

This thesis is an historical case-study using archival written data to analyse the formation of a neo-evangelical identity within Oregon Yearly Meeting (OYM) of the Religious Society of Friends, with emphasis on the years 1919-1947. The argument of this thesis is that by 1919 there were fundamentalist thinking patterns developing within the corporate religious identity of the Yearly Meeting (YM) marked by ecumenical separatism, world-rejecting views, biblical literalism and decreasing social action. The values of this fundamentalist identity became dominant by 1926, pervading the mindset of the YM until the late 1940s when it was replaced with a more socially-concerned, world-engaging expression of evangelicalism. This neo-evangelicalism attempted to highlight positive Christianity, while maintaining the supernatural orthodox theology of its fundamentalist predecessors. The pattern that unfolded in OYM shares similarities with a larger pattern taking place throughout Protestant Christianity in America over the same period.

This research makes original contributions to scholarship in three ways. Firstly, it analyses a particularly influential group among evangelical American Quakers during the twentieth-century. Secondly, it starts to redress the dearth of scholarship specific to evangelical Quakerism, and, thirdly it adds to the scholarship on twentieth-century American Protestantism by focusing on an understudied region and denomination.

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Quakers - the Religious Society of Friends. Quaker meeting at Gracechurch Street ©. Quakers are members of a group with Christian roots that began in England in the 1650s. The formal title of the movement is the Society of Friends or the Religious Society of Friends. There are about 210,000 Quakers across the world. Quakers integrate religion and everyday life. They believe God can be found in the middle of everyday life and human relationships, as much as during a meeting for worship. What Quakers believe. The wedding ceremony is usually held within a simple meeting for worship. It has no set order of service or sermon. In most cases, the finer details of the ceremony are decided through discussion with the marriage registering officers and community elders. The Religious Society of Friends was founded in England by George Fox, a shoemaker's apprentice. Fox experienced a crisis of faith in the 1640s leading him to travel the country seeking other dissenters. This opposed a growing Evangelical movement in Quakerism, where congregations increasingly moved towards more conventional worship. By 1828, Hicks' followers left the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to form the Hicksite Branch of the Quaker faith, while those remaining became the Orthodox branch. Influential Quaker members of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, particularly John Woolman (1720-72) and Anthony Benezet (1713-84), stressed the immorality of slaveholding and its tendency to corrupt masters into such sins as haughtiness, laziness, and violence. Quakers (Friends)Alaska Yearly MeetingCentral Yearly Meeting of FriendsEvangelical Friends Church—Eastern RegionEvangelical Friends InternationalFriends General ConferenceFriends United MeetingIntermountain Yearly MeetingIowa Yearly Meeting of Friends (Conservative)Missouri Valley Friends Conference Source for information on Quakers (Friends): Melton's Encyclopedia of American Religions dictionary. Doctrinally, the Central Yearly Meeting of Friends is evangelical and very conservative in matters of personal holiness. Worship is programmed. The largest of all the North American Quaker bodies, the Five Years Meeting of Friends was formed in 1902 as a loose coordinating agency by 12 yearly meetings.