

Quakerism began in England in the 1650s. George Fox, credited as leading the movement, had an experience of 1647 in which he felt he could hear Christ directly and inwardly without the mediation of text or minister. Convinced of the authenticity of this experience and its universal application, Fox preached a spirituality in which potentially all were ministers, all part of a priesthood of believers, a church levelled before the leadership of God. Quakers are a fascinating religious group both in their original 'peculiarity' and in the variety of reinterpretations of the faith since. The way they have interacted with wider society is a basic but often unknown part of British and American history. This handbook charts their history and the history of their expression as a religious community.

This volume provides an indispensable reference work for the study of Quakerism. It is global in its perspectives and interdisciplinary in its approach whilst offering the reader a clear narrative through the academic debates. In addition to an in-depth survey of historical readings of Quakerism, the handbook provides a treatment of the group's key theological premises and its links with wider Christian thinking. Quakerism's distinctive ecclesiastical forms and practices are analysed, and its social, economic, political, and ethical outcomes examined. Each of the 37 chapters considers broader religious, social, and cultural contexts and provides suggestions for further reading and the volume concludes with an extensive bibliography to aid further research.

*Oxford Handbooks* offer authoritative and up-to-date surveys of original research in a particular subject area. Specially commissioned essays from leading figures in the discipline give critical examinations of the progress and direction of debates, as well as a foundation for future research. *Oxford Handbooks* provide scholars and graduate students with compelling new perspectives upon a wide range of subjects in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences.

# The Oxford Handbook of QUAKER STUDIES

- Comprehensive coverage of the history, theology, and sociology of Quakerism
  - Global coverage reflecting the international vibrancy of the movement today
  - Rigorous but accessible essays written by 42 leading experts in the field
- Selected readings provided with each essay with an extended bibliography to aid further research

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