

## Some of the various models of Quaker self-understanding, and their ecumenical implications

*Eden Grace, July 2000*

<b>Source/Position</b>	<b>if Quakerism is ...</b>	<b>and the other churches are ...</b>	<b>then our attitude toward ecumenism will be ...</b>
Robert Barclay (1676)	the remnant, "the first fruits of those who serve Him and who no longer worship him with the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit"	"the dead, dark, corrupt image and mere shadow and shell of Christianity with which Antichrist has deceived the nations" (p. 439)	we stand against everything the other churches represent. God will make us prosper until we consume them.
Lewis Benson (1964)	the one true church of the new covenant. apostolic	utterly apostate, frozen in the old covenant. constantinian	beware the danger of being influenced by such a lost cause
"evangelical/holiness" model	the spiritual community of the sanctified	some are sanctified, some are not. We have to judge and discern carefully	the ecumenical movement is the latest manifestation of the non-sanctified, institutional, worldly church. Beware. Christian unity is only possible with other evangelicals.
Joseph John Gurney (1824)	absolutely orthodox and main-stream in all essential doctrines, but called to a higher standard in those things which are discretionary	manifestations of God's love which can speak to a variety of conditions	we can be united with all genuinely orthodox Christians
"held in trust" model	"We believe we hold this witness in trust for the whole church" (To Lima with Love)	in need of our witness	actively engaged, in order to fulfill our call to share our truth with all
"renewal movement" model (Creasey)	a 17th century renewal movement in the church, with enduring insights	essentially one, through the ages and places, in various manifestations in response to context	ecumenism is the Christian response to the modern context. Many people and churches are looking for our kind of insights. We should share them.
"mysticism" model	the luminous trail of Christian mysticism through the ages	places where the vital experience of God's presence may or may not be felt	cooperate with other mystics from whatever quarter
Thomas Storey (1737)	a careful reflection on the new covenant and its implications for faith and life	perpetuation of the old covenant through unreflective tradition	we could find spiritual unity with all genuine Christians, if there were any, and if the existing church would stop persecuting us
"refugee camp" model	a place of sanctuary for those who have fled other churches	scary, corrupt or oppressive; dogmatic and closed-minded	hope for the reform of the other churches, so that we could become friends again
"vocation" model	analogous to a monastic order, a particularly rigorous Christian life to which only some people are called	the "laity", not called to our distinctive religious life	cooperate on projects, but keep our Society to itself
"orthopraxis" model	a Society with a high ethical standard of life, not a uniformity of dogma	creedally defined, dogmatically centered and authoritatively enforced	we will work with anyone who shares our ethical values, but we are excluded from the search for unity in doctrine
"scientist" model	a logical belief system, entirely consistent with what we know about the universe	illogical, non-scientific, miracle-based or anti-intellectual	we find no common ground with other churches, and instead find our partners in other modern scientific movements
"post-Christian" model	the nucleus of a new mystical world faith	stuck in an overly historical and exclusivist perspective	avoid it, since it is backward-looking