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Quakers (Shire Library)



QUAKERS

PETER FURTADO

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Synopsis

Though there have never been many Quakers, these small numbers belie the sect's tremendous impact, both historical and contemporary. Quakerism has produced an astonishing and disproportionate number of eminent thinkers, scientists, industrialists and businessmen, who are united not only by their success but by their commitment to philanthropy and social justice. Quakers also played an important role in early American history, William Penn even having a state named after him. In this illustrated introduction, Peter Furtado traces the history of Quakerism through the tumultuous period of the Civil War and Restoration, its zealous and unrelenting opposition to the slave trade, and its continued work at the forefront of peacemaking, poverty relief, conflict resolution and charity. He also looks closely at the egalitarian teachings of Quakerism's founder, George Fox, and at how the sect's beliefs have developed since, including their undaunted pacifism and why they have been so successful in business.

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Customer Reviews

I am currently pastoring an Evangelical Friends Church, part of a LARGE group of Quakers that are marginalized, if not barely mentioned in this historical account. I am not a Quaker myself, and am still part of a different denomination on paper. I hoped to get a quick history of Quakers that would just highlight the history. Conveniently, this author talked about Quaker beginnings, and every time a liberal v. fundamental / conservative Christian schism happened, the author seemed primarily concerned with following the liberal strand of Quakerism to where it is today: more of a social, new-age, activistic, pacifistic group with a vague hint of spirituality, not Christian at all. This author makes mere mentions of the existence still in America, as well as a few third world countries where Evangelical, Christ-centered Quakerism is thriving, as if they are not important. While I understand the intrigue to the broader world of a group of people like the liberal Quakers who continue to thrive as a social, separate religion, somewhere between a semi-Christianity, new-agey group... I think the author does detriment to the history of the Quakers by leaving out still a thriving, orthodox Christianity more than present in Quaker circles today.

Pros:+ Very quick read with with historical facts+ Very easy to follow+ Cheap on the Kindle+ Explains the intrigue of liberal Quakerism

Cons:+ Slanted view, by focusing primarily on liberal Quakerism+ May cause non-religious intrigue, while causing Christians to label all Quakerism as a cult, which is simply not the case+ Obviously from an author who has no appreciation for Quakerism's rich Christian heritage

I knew Richard Nixon had come out of the Quaker tradition, but others surprised me. This short book is a good introduction to historic Quakerism, and a jumping off place for those who want to examine the movement more closely. I guess I was also surprised how much the Quakers resemble the modern liberal church.

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