William Penn wrote nearly 90 books, tracts and pamphlets describing, explaining, defending, and supporting the beliefs of the young Quaker movement. His years as a writer spanned from 1668 to 1702 (when Penn was ages 24 to 58). He lived an extraordinarily active life. For the ten years after 1668, though often in jail for conscience’ sake, Penn engaged individuals of every religious stripe, from conservative Anglican churchmen to furious sectarians, in vigorous debate. His writings helped shape the political thought of England and America and strengthened the Quaker movement. Even today, they make vital reading. Let us look at several of his most significant writings.

SANDY FOUNDATION SHAKEN (1668)
Within less than a month in late 1668, William Penn wrote, published and circulated his treatise Sandy Foundation Shaken, creating public uproar. He was arrested, and imprisoned in the Tower of London on charges of printing without a license from the Bishop of London. But Penn’s real crime was blasphemy - his refutation of the Trinity and Jesus’ divinity. He stayed in the Tower for nine months. The Bishop of London threatened Penn with life-time incarceration. Penn replied, “…I owe my conscience to no mortal man…I value not their threats…I can [wear out] their malice and peevishness, and in me they shall behold a resolution above fear, conscience above cruelty…”

This first of William Penn’s treatises reveals his complete devotion to the Quaker cause. It is a sophisticated and eloquent statement of his belief that Quakerism is the only true religion in England. At age 24, Penn had become the most articulate, powerful and popular Quaker leader.

The Sandy Foundation Shaken treatise is a forceful and articulate defense of Quaker beliefs, and it sent Penn to jail in 1668. He begins by quoting classical writers, and plunges into three main topics: a Quaker refutation of Protestant interpretations of the Trinity; Christ’s atonement; and the doctrine of justification.

Penn here denies the existence of the Trinity. “If God, as the Scriptures testify, hath never been declared or believed but as the Holy ONE, then it will follow, that God is not a Holy THREE, nor doth subsist in THREE distinct and separate Holy ONES.” Penn argues that Trinitarian belief is not only contrary to Scripture but illogical as well. Penn further argues that if the Father, Son and Spirit are three distinct substances, they are three distinct Gods, and the Trinity is a fiction.

The second theme in Penn’s Sandy Foundation Shaken essay is Jesus’s divinity. If the Trinity is not valid, as Penn implies, is Jesus of divine essence? Penn proposes that Jesus is the logos, “the word of God,” who enlightens every one. He was God’s interpreter, Penn says, but he was not God, only deified man. Quaker doctrine preached private judgment about beliefs and the rejection of authority and the insistence on the free uses of reason – not the supposed authority of the theologians. That is, each believer interprets the Bible for him/herself.
The third theme of Penn’s *Sandy Foundation Shaken* is to establish God’s infinite capacity for mercy and forgiveness. The God of Penn and the Quakers is not the angry, vengeful deity of most other Puritan sects – like the Presbyterians. He is rather a God of perpetual benevolence and absolution. Penn asserts that that the Passion of Christ is merely an example of how mankind should live in mercy and forgiveness. Penn asserts that Jesus suffered and was executed for his beliefs, not as the savior or messiah, but as the perfect example of holy resignation to God’s divine will.

Penn is thus challenging the orthodox belief that Jesus died to atone for centuries of human sin. Rather, Penn asserts that the Passion of Christ is merely an example of how mankind should live in mercy and forgiveness. Penn refutes the notion of original sin and predestination, because they “insult” a merciful and forgiving God. The two greatest gifts of God to mankind are reason and freedom of choice, and so each individual can decide for him/herself how to follow God’s word in their soul. This is the “freedom of conscience.”

**NO CROSS, NO CROWN (1668)**

Prison life drove Penn to examine his faith amid violent persecution of the Quaker movement, and he now writes *No Cross, No Crown* in the Tower of London. Later, in 1682, he published an expanded revised version by the same title. He hoped that by writing a full explication of the Quaker faith, he would be able to disarm those who see the Quakers as radical dissenters, who propagate heretical ideas and subvert social order and public stability.

In *No Cross, No Crown*, Penn implores his readers to examine his thoughts with a serious and impartial mind. First, he explains Quaker rules of behavior, citing Scripture to support his arguments. Quakers reject “gay clothing and rich attire” in favor of modest dress. Quakers do not remove their hats in the presence of their supposed social betters because God made all people equal – even the king. Penn criticizes the unabashed worldliness of Restoration England – its pride, avarice and luxury. Penn believes that the misery and suffering of the poor is caused by worldliness of the rich. Quakers insist on using the personal pronouns “thee” and “thou” when addressing all people, rather than reserving “you” for wealthy and powerful persons.

**INNOCENCY WITH HER OPEN FACE (1669)**

Penn intended for this tract to be read principally by King Charles II and his brother James, the Duke of York, and the Privy Council. This is an apologia, that is, an explanation or a retraction, of his treatise the *Sandy Foundation Shaken*. Penn says he realizes that his refutation of the Trinity is interpreted by some as a denial of Christ’s divinity. He now says, “I conclude Christ to be God; for if none can save, or be styled properly a Savior but God, it [follows] that Christ the Savior is God.” Penn did still embrace anti-Trinitarian sentiments. Penn’s God, as expressed in Christ, remains a God of remission and forgiveness, a God of love and gentleness and boundless understanding. Penn modifies his position on Jesus’s divinity to appeal to the king to release him from prison. Charles II approved Penn’s tract. Penn was soon released to the custody of his ailing father, the Admiral.
THE GREAT CASE OF LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE (1671)

In 1671, William Penn was arrested and jailed yet again for sixth months, for violating the 1664 Conventicle Act by speaking publicly to Quakers in London. Penn could have paid his way out of jail, but he preferred to share jail in the infamous New Gate prison with fellow Quakers. Penn then opens his Great Case of Liberty of Conscience tract by defining what he believes to be liberty of conscience: It is “…the free and uninterrupted exercise of our conscience in that way of worship we are most clearly persuaded God requires us to serve Him in…”

This was the age of the scientific revolution. “Men’s power over nature, not God’s grace, would henceforth be his salvation.” To Penn, deprivation of mankind’s intellectual power – God’s greatest gift to humanity -- is enslavement of the mind that would reduce men and women to the level of beasts. Therefore, the basis of government is civil, not ecclesiastical. The imposition of one form of Christianity is not necessary for political stability. Penn hopes to convince his readers that it is persecution, not dissent from the minority, which destroys government, religion, prosperity and peace.

THE HOLY EXPERIMENT (1682)

William Penn thought about the possibility of setting up a Christian state along Quaker lines. In the 1670s, Penn, along with Robert Barclay and George Fox, was one of the three most influential leaders of Quakerism. Penn was more astute and political. By the 1680s, Penn had developed his own idea of a Christian democracy. He wanted to start something from the beginning. He wanted to fashion a community, a state, according to his own conception of what it should be.

In 1681, Charles II granted Penn the Charter for Pennsylvania. Penn described his project idealistically as a “Holy Experiment” and “an example to the nations.” He expected the colony to be permeated with the spirit of God, filling the province with virtuous people who knew God’s will and lived according to his light.
In 1682, Penn then drafted a constitution, a “Frame of Government,” for his province that developed the relationship between Quaker spiritual practice and political power. Penn’s framework proclaimed government as the agent of God to provide a rule of law on earth which would provide peaceful behavior among men and women. This first Pennsylvania constitution provided for an Assembly and a Provincial Council, chosen by election of the freemen of the province. The Council would consult with the Governor to propose laws, and the Assembly would approve laws.

October 28, 1682, William Penn arrived in the New World, debarking from his ship Welcome in New Castle, Delaware. He set about implementing his “Holy Experiment” by meeting with the inhabitants, speaking with magistrates, and beginning the planning of Philadelphia. Penn’s surveyor, Thomas Holme, laid out streets under Penn’s direction, radiating in a square grid from the corner of Broad and High (now Market) Streets.

There were two main elements in the “holy experiment:” liberty and peace. Foremost among the first laws was a statute protecting liberty of conscience. Toleration was ensured for anyone who professed a belief in God, and government offices could be filled by anyone who professed a belief in Jesus Christ. Penn pursued peaceful relations in treaties with the Lenni-Lenape (or Delaware) Indians. Penn said, “We will act justly, even generously, with all…we will never be the aggressor…We cannot fight because we believe that fighting itself is immoral and we would do no wrong, even for a righteous cause…” Indians were treated fairly and with respect, and Penn’s Indian policies are justly considered among his wisest and most effective.

In the Frame of Government, Penn reveals that he believes that mankind is “generally endowed with native goodness and is inclined toward sympathetic behavior. Man was made a noble, rational, grave creature; his pleasure stood in his duty and his duty in obeying God…” Penn believed that it is God’s intention for man to establish society, to enable all people to pursue a Godly life. He believes strongly in a close relationship between religion and government.

Penn biographer, Mary Maples Dun, sums up William Penn as “a philosopher and politician,” who “combined in himself idealism and realism, sophistication and innocence, cunning and trustfulness, success and failure. He was always constant to the great principle of liberty of conscience.”

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As we become more fully acquainted with Philadelphia’s founder, William Penn, in his writings, I admit my debt again to author John A. Moretta whose book William Penn and the Quaker Legacy, has been
our guide in this story. I want to express again my appreciation to Mt. Airy residents and Quaker followers Susan Bockius, Marlena Santoyo and Tom Armstrong, and to Jaime Kehler, for their editorial help and encouragement.
Political philosophy is understood as the only fundamentally meaningful way to change human reality. The two following ways of change are contrasted throughout the course: the radical way of change with purpose of creating a new form of life, which is typical for the "continental" political philosophy, and the incremental way of change with purpose of consistent and sustainable improvement of an existing political community, which is typical for "analytic" or "normative" political philosophy. Neither way has priority by default, the choice of change being dependent on the purpose of change.

2. Learning Objectives

Students will learn the contemporary political philosophy, with purpose of getting meaningful philosophical orientation within the political reality. Political philosophy, also known as political theory, is the study of topics such as politics, liberty, justice, property, rights, law, and the enforcement of laws by authority: what they are, if they are needed, what makes a government legitimate, what rights and freedoms it should protect, what form it should take, what the law is, and what duties citizens owe to a legitimate government, if any, and when it may be legitimately overthrown, if ever.