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## **“TAKING AWAY THE OCCASION FOR VIOLENCE”: THE QUAKER PEACE TESTIMONY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT IN THE JUSTICE AND POLICY STUDIES DEPARTMENT AT GUILFORD COLLEGE**

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The mid-sized southern city of Greensboro, North Carolina has not been spared from the crisis in policing gripping the United States. The city has a history of racial conflict and violence involving the police, most notably the 1979 Massacre where five anti-Klan protestors were killed by Neo-Nazi and Klan members. It is also the site of renowned movements for social justice; in 1961, four North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University freshmen sparked the Sit-In movement, and in 2005, the first Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the United States, which addressed the Massacre, took place in Greensboro.

Through partnerships with activists, police, and other community members, the Justice and Policy Studies Department (JPS) at Guilford College works to strengthen police-community relations in Greensboro. The Quaker peace testimony, which calls for “taking away the occasion for violence,” inspires and guides these efforts. This article explores the ways that JPS and its community partners prepare students to *take away the occasion for violence* in policing and the criminal justice system. Guilford’s president, two JPS professors, a Deputy Chief of the Greensboro Police Department and a community organizer with the Beloved Community Center share their insights regarding this critical topic.

On December 3, 2014, hours after a grand jury declined to indict a New York City police officer for killing Eric Garner, protesters in Greensboro, North Carolina shut down traffic at the city’s largest downtown intersection. The decision ignited an eruption of

anger and protests across the country, and Greensboro was no exception. However, in Greensboro, the police did not respond with pepper spray or arrests, as officers in some cities did that night; rather, police leadership spoke with protest organizers and made the decision to redirect traffic and to “let them be heard.” The local newspaper quoted Deputy Police Chief James Hinson as saying, “Not making any arrests yet. We just want to make sure this ends peacefully” (Lopez, 2014).

Greensboro residents’ responses to the police handling of the protesters ranged from surprised relief and gratitude, to outrage. Many hoped that the police restraint signaled a change in their practices; at past marches, protesters had been arrested for blocking traffic and, in at least once case, tasered (Killian, 2007). Others were offended and outraged that the protesters were not arrested; they broke the law and should pay the consequences.

This dramatic split in residents’ responses is mirrored by racial and economic divides in the city; Greensboro continues to be heavily segregated with a distressing level of economic inequality. From 2000 to 2009, the median annual income for whites in Greensboro increased \$5,300; the annual income for African-Americans increased by only \$11 (Patterson, 2011). Greensboro’s history also reflects significant racial conflict and division, including the 1979 killing by Klansmen and Neo-Nazis of five anti-Klan demonstrators and their acquittal by two all-white juries (University of North Carolina at Greensboro, n.d.), and more recently, the litigation against the city of Greensboro in 2009 by 39 black police officers for discrimination (Lehmert & Fernandez, 2009). At the same time, there have been momentous efforts to address racial injustice: on February 1, 1961, four North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University students sparked the

Sit-In movement at the Woolworth's department store; and in 2005, the first Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the United States was established there to address the massacre at the anti-Klan rally (Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Project, 2006; Jovanovic, 2012).

The Justice and Policy Studies Department at Quaker-founded Guilford College is intentionally embedded in these local Greensboro political and social dynamics; faculty and students in the department's two majors, Criminal Justice, and Community and Justice Studies, participate in police-community dialogues, city council meetings, and other civic events that offer complex, real life examples that students can use to apply and challenge theories from course readings.

Jane Fernandes, the new president of Guilford College, recently heard a detailed account of JPS' teaching and accomplishments and reflected back to faculty something they hadn't seen themselves: the embodiment of the Quaker Peace Testimony in the JPS curriculum and pedagogy. Fernandes' observation resonated enough with faculty to spark further exploration of the connection, the results of which are recounted in this article.

The Quaker Peace Testimony includes a belief in the "light within" or the intrinsic value and capacity for goodness of every person, and the imperative to "take away the occasion" for all war and violence (North Carolina Yearly Meeting – Conservative, 1983). As such, this article explores the question: "how do the JPS department and their community partners prepare students--who will be police officers, prosecutors, parole officers, prison administrators, judges, city leaders, and community activists—to find

*ways to take away the occasion for violence in policing and more broadly, in the criminal justice system?"*

Each contributor to the article has played an important role in the JPS curriculum: President Fernandes through connecting the peace testimony to the curriculum; Deputy Chief Hinson, as a part-time instructor in JPS and participant in JPS-led community initiatives; Wesley Morris, as an organizer with the Beloved Community Center, one of JPS' core community partners; and Barbara Lawrence and Sherry Giles, as JPS faculty members.

Each author brings a unique perspective on taking away the occasion for violence in law enforcement that contributes to the preparation of JPS students to engage in this work in their post-Guilford lives and professions. President Fernandes begins with a reflection on how the JPS curriculum and pedagogy are part of Guilford College's principled legacy of peaceful resolution of conflict, community, and social justice. Giles then delves into the origins of the peace testimony and its contemporary application to law enforcement by Quakers, and in the JPS curriculum. Lawrence follows with a reflection on how her experience as an African American woman, former police officer, prosecutor, and public defender, and now as a professor, teaching people who are incarcerated and chairing a "people's" citizen review board for police accountability have led her full circle in her understanding of policing as peacekeeping. Deputy Chief Hinson discusses the importance of Compassion being added to the core values of the Greensboro Police Department, and finally, Morris highlights the vital role of community in holding police accountable. The article concludes with reflections on

the implications of incorporating the peace testimony in academic programs for cultural and political change.

### **A Principled Legacy**

**Jane K. Fernandes:** The 1837 founders of Guilford College were ahead of their time in their attention to peaceful conflict resolution, community, and social justice. Our Quaker predecessors placed the education of women and girls on a par with that of men and boys; taught slaves to read at a time when it was against North Carolina state law to do so; and supported the Underground Railroad operating through their campus property at personal risk. During the Civil War and immediately following, the school community kept the school running against all odds. They made many sacrifices to sustain the school and their legacy. Now, continuing that legacy is our responsibility.

As a non-Quaker, I had begun to immerse myself in learning about the Society of Friends from my very first exploration of the school. Five original Quaker testimonies – community, equality, integrity, simplicity and peace – undergird the College’s current values-based curriculum. Guided in the context of the Quaker ethos, in July 2014, I was honored and humbled to begin service as Guilford College’s ninth president, the first woman and first deaf person to hold this position. One of my discoveries is that our historical roots in racial justice are sustained today by a richly diverse and inclusive faculty, staff and student body.

Just a few short weeks after I began as president, the deeply disturbing event in Ferguson, Missouri took place. A police officer, shooting first and asking questions later, killed Michael Brown, an unarmed young African American man. These unasked

and therefore unanswered questions gripped our nation. As the questions grew and festered, demonstrations and riots broke loose in Ferguson, a city and community left devastated by the apparently unjustifiable killing of one of its citizens by an officer of the law. As evidenced by the re-emergence of riots and lockdowns coinciding with the one-year anniversary Michael Brown's killing, the city of Ferguson is still gripped by grief and pain. The human and material cost of the moment Michael Brown lost his life is incalculable. There must be a better, more humane way.

Around this time, Guilford's Justice and Policy Studies Department asked to introduce me to their work, and I learned about the innovative approaches to law enforcement that their B.S. and B.A. degrees espouse. We had an initial conversation about whether it was time for Guilford to take a higher profile in the questions being asked about law enforcement and its relationship to the African American community. We wondered if it would be possible to build a philosophy and a practice of law enforcement in which officers understood and lived out their dual role of maintaining order and keeping peace. How could Guilford College fulfill a duty to bridge the growing divide between the two roles?

By December similar unjustifiable killings had taken place in Staten Island, Cleveland, and elsewhere. Many on campus were asking whether the young African American men killed at this time – Michael Brown, Eric Garner, and Tamir Rice – would have been killed if they were White and whether police officers should have found non-lethal ways to resolve the incidents before resorting to the use of lethal weapons.

Of course, we had no way to answer these questions, but the frequency of incidents that tragically resulted in the deaths of African American men at the hands of

police officers necessitated that we ask a larger question: Do we in effect have two criminal justice systems that operate in very different ways, one for White citizens and another for African American citizens? The fact that so many African American citizens as well as members of other communities of color and a growing number of White people do believe this to be true is corrosive to the civic unity that is essential to the democracy we purport to be. We all pay a heavy human, material, and financial cost for allowing people of color to experience injustice in our law enforcement policy and practice and the added injustice of experiencing nothing done in response. These injustices are not just a concern for African American citizens. They are and must be a concern for all of us.

And they must be a concern for members of law enforcement who, we presume, truly do wish to serve and protect every member of our communities, for the politicians elected to lead those communities, and for the educators, community organizers, clergy, social activists, and so many others who daily work to examine and transform the legacy of racism in our nation.

As the school year progressed, many other African American men died when involved with police officers. One of the images forever etched in my mind is that of young Baltimore teenagers moving as an organized group with a remarkably disciplined rhythm throwing rocks at Baltimore police officers who defended themselves with riot gear in the wake of Freddie Gray's death. Live national television showed the police allowing themselves to become targets. I worried for all of our children in the wake of our apparent inability to maintain peace on our public streets. How can we achieve the civil and just society we strive to be? I asked myself, as Guilford College's president,

what our responsibility as educators is to live with this question, explore answers, and create new knowledge that will guide law enforcement to a positive relationship with communities they serve, especially African Americans and other people of color.

In June, the final month of my first year as president, we arose to the news of another tragic shooting claiming the lives of nine African Americans at a famous historically Black church in Charleston, South Carolina. In the wake of continued killings of African Americans, we cannot turn a blind eye to what has devolved into a tragedy of epic proportions. Black lives decidedly do matter.

Struggling with social justice issues of breadth and complexity is precisely the legacy we inherited from Guilford College's founders. We strive to engage students with their studies in an intellectual way while also learning to see the world as an arena for action in which they apply their learning to address social issues. Our students learn to understand the dynamics that have structured – and continue to structure – interactions among various communities, especially when those dynamics reflect differentials of racial, social, and economic power.

As you will read in the following pages, the Justice and Policy Studies department took seriously the question of whether law enforcement philosophy and practice can or should be grounded in peace. We do not have all the answers, but we are asking the questions. As risk takers and innovators, we are fulfilling our role as a principled and practical liberal arts college actively engaged in the greater community. With the direct involvement of Greensboro police officers and community organizers focused on peace, we hope to create relevant and authentic approaches to law enforcement and convey them through our curriculum. Moved by the work of the Justice

and Policy Studies department, I invite you to learn about this forward-thinking work as well.

### **The Peace Testimony in the Justice and Policy Studies Department**

**Hollyce “Sherry” Giles:** Few would disagree that policing in the United States is in crisis. The seemingly unending deaths of unarmed African Americans as a result of police actions, the murder of two New York City police officers by a gunman in late 2014, the overreliance on the use of force by police (Apuzzo, 2015) and the use of police to respond to social ills when they are ill-equipped for this kind of work (Coates, 2015) offer undeniable evidence of this crisis.

In the context of this broken and deadly criminal justice system, how can academic programs prepare students who are going to be part of the system to transform it? How can the Quaker peace testimony inform these efforts?

My connection to this topic has grown organically from my work as a JPS professor and from being active in social change efforts in Greensboro. I've led community-based research projects on police accountability with students and the Beloved Community Center and helped with Beloved's efforts to organize an Interim Citizen's Review Board to hold police accountable; co-founded *Counter Stories* a restorative justice community initiative that brings together police, community members, and city leaders to build a city where all residents feel safe, respected, and protected; and am a member of the Program Committee for the American Friends Service Committee, Carolinas office, which addresses police militarization and violence. My most powerful learning about the excessive use of force by police has come from

spending time in communities with first-hand experience of it and hearing survivors' stories.

The origins of the Quaker peace testimony come from the declaration made by Quaker founder George Fox and others to King Charles II of England in 1660: "We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fighting with outward weapons for any end or under any pretense whatever; . . ." Each Quaker yearly meeting, interprets the testimony in the context of its time and place, often in the form of a query. The North Carolina Yearly Meeting – Conservative (1983) poses this query: "Do we endeavor to live in the life and power that *takes away the occasion of all war*, seeking to do our part in the work of reconciliation between individuals, groups, and nations?"

In recent years, the peace testimony has expanded beyond a focus on the violence of war to include violence related to policing, and structural violence, defined as social structures that cause harm to people by not allowing them to meet their needs. As Quaker Roy Love has noted ". . . the testimony to peace . . . has been broadened today to include all the social and economic evils from which war and conflict emerge" (Love, 2015, p. 14). Quaker organizations, such as the American Friends Service Committee, the Friends Committee on National Legislation, and the Alternatives to Violence Project, work toward changes in policing and social structures guided by the peace testimony.

The Justice and Policy Studies department, or JPS, is one of the largest departments at Guilford College, with over 200 students enrolled in its two majors—Criminal Justice and Community and Justice Studies. The Criminal Justice major studies the criminal justice system from an administrative, top-down vantage point,

while the perspective of the Community and Justice Studies major is grounded in a grass roots, bottom-up view of justice. Since the requirements for the two majors overlap considerably, current and aspiring police officers sit in the same classrooms with community activists, including those involved with the #BlackLivesMatter movement. Faculty have realized that the conflicts between these worldviews imported from the broader society into our classrooms, and into our department meetings, offer us a unique opportunity to grapple with the divide between police and communities of color; we work to make these creative tensions from which we can learn.

Three components of our curriculum prepare students to “remove the occasion for violence” in policing and the broader criminal justice system, guided by a belief in the “inward light” or innate value of every human being. The first component is engaging students in the critical study of the role of policing in relation to the American political economy, that is, how political, economic, and racial/cultural systems shape our understanding of criminal offences and violence, and acceptable police responses to the offences. Our current courses that address this topic are Race, Society, and Criminal Justice; Understanding Oppressive Systems; and Trust and Violence. The knowledge offered by these courses gives students a critical perspective on policing that they can take with them in to the field to use to change it.

The second component of our curriculum that reflects the peace testimony is courses that teach skills that enable students to address serious social and community issues in non-violent ways. These courses include Restorative Justice—an approach that brings offenders, victims, and communities together to repair harms and restore

relationships; Community Building; Conflict Resolution; Group Dynamics and Leadership; and Community Problem Solving.

The third component, which I believe to be the most powerful, are the substantial experiential parts of our curriculum: our community-based teaching and research; faculty and student involvement in local initiatives on police accountability, community safety, and healing; and our Higher Education in Prison Initiative in which people who are incarcerated take Guilford College courses. Guilford faculty teach in the prison initiative, and our students on the “outside” offer tutoring to students who are “inside” a local prison.

Through these engagements, we remove the occasion for violence by coming into relationship with each other and increasing our understanding of radically different perspectives. One example of this process can be found in our community-based research projects on police accountability in partnership with the Beloved Community Center. In the fall of 2010, the Greensboro police chief wrote to the then president of Guilford College and asked him to stop the research project we were doing on police accountability. The president declined to do so, responding that such research into a public institution may prove useful, and that the college doesn’t censor faculty’s teaching or scholarship. Four years later, in the spring of 2014, when we began a subsequent research project on the police, the same police chief accepted our invitation to meet with us early in the project, and came to the public presentation of the findings at the end of the semester, along with his supervisor, the Deputy City Manager for Public Safety, and his Deputy Chief, James Hinson. We didn’t agree on everything, but

police heard voices from the community, and members of the community had a better understanding of police perspectives.

We have faced some challenges in our efforts. One issue is institutional racism within the broader community, and in the police department, reflected in many ways, including the absence of grocery stores and other amenities on the east, more African American side of town, the difference in economic outcomes for whites and blacks (Patterson, 2011), and racial profiling even within the police department (Lehmert & Fernandez, 2009). A promising recent initiative in which JPS faculty and students participated was “Doing Our Own Work: White People Working to End Racism.” The mostly white Greensboro residents at the group’s first meeting at a local church heard disturbing information about racial inequities in Greensboro and began discussing strategies to change these decades-old patterns (McLaughlin, 2015).

A related issue is making sure that people just trying to survive are part of our efforts to hold the police accountable and strengthen police-community relations. Greensboro police have been holding Coffee with a Cop gathering, mostly in coffee shops frequented by white liberals in west Greensboro, instead of barber shops on the east, more African American side of town. And in our *Counter Stories* groups, people most at the mercy of the excessive use of force by police, have been underrepresented.

Quaker Paul Hamell articulates a pathway for taking away the occasion for violence in law enforcement that offers a worthy goal for JPS and our partners: “When the police rejoin the community, the community can truly take responsibility for its own safety . . . but not community policing units that are essentially PR units or used as aggressive street crime or narcotics suppression teams. But “partners in peacemaking

with the community.” This is a daunting goal to work toward with our police colleagues and the civilian community, a goal made more likely if we can remember that the inward light dwells within everyone, young black people, police officers, academics, and other community members—everyone trying to build a more peaceful and just city.

### **Coming Full Circle**

**Barbara J. Lawrence:** As a fearless African American woman who went from police officer to prosecutor to public defender and now professor, teaching courses in the Justice and Policy Studies (JPS) Department at Guilford College for the past nine years has been an enlightening and “full circle” experience for me. A native New Yorker who served as a New York City police officer for thirteen years and was formally educated in a progressive criminal justice bachelor’s program at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, I bring a perspective to policing, peace keeping and police accountability that is not only unique but sometimes “schizophrenic.” When I teach our Race, Society and Criminal Justice, and Understanding Oppressive Systems courses, it is easy for me to embrace and discuss with students some major aspects of Michelle Alexander’s (2011) book, *The New Jim Crow*, that describes biased practices of the police in the United States, while at the same time understanding these practices from a police officer’s perspective.

In her “Color of Justice” chapter, Alexander (2011) observes: in every state, “African Americans, particularly in the poorest neighborhoods, are subjected to tactics and practices that would result in public outrage and scandal if committed in middle-class white neighborhoods.” There were several years of my life as an officer that I deliberately, albeit both reluctantly and willingly, participated in different aspects of

extreme policing and hyper surveillance in certain communities in New York City: from working narcotics undercover in poor neighborhoods in Brooklyn to decoy assignments waiting for poor people to “snatch my gold chain” or “jump the turnstile” in the subway system. Mainstream media and my research show there is not much difference in law enforcement practices today than when I was an officer almost thirty years ago.

These courses help students understand and realize how some of the impact of policing people of color is evidenced before our eyes on nightly news channels that show communities in American cities that have many young men, particularly African American, wasting away who are unable to thrive because most are under the supervision of the criminal justice system. Racial bias in the war on drugs is a major reason one in 14 black men was behind bars in 2006 compared to one in 106 white men (Alexander, 2011). The numbers are not much different or worse today.

Reflecting back on my experiences in the late 80s and early/mid 90s, they at times resemble some of the current enforcement practices of the Greensboro Police Department and other law enforcement departments in the United States in similarly situated neighborhoods. This past spring semester I was able to have students vividly apply the racialized practices outlined in our course readings by using several mainstream media examples of biased and racial profiling cases that, in some instances, ended in tragedy, including Eric Garner, Freddie Gray, Michael Brown, etc. These situations offered clear examples of the additional work and education that needs to happen in both law enforcement and communities that have large numbers of African Americans; these efforts must include new and different discussions of peace and peace-keeping.

In these criminal justice courses I teach, it is has been necessary and helpful for me to bring guest speakers who are members of the police department ranked from police officer up to Deputy Chief. Students have been able to engage with these officers in ways that broadened their perspectives from both sides as it relates to law enforcement, peace keeping and crime control. In one class an African American Lieutenant spent half of the class period talking about the fear he and his patrol officers are feeling when responding to situations. The fear of not being able to go home to their families may cause them to be less patient/tolerant of uncooperative citizens. He explained how most people follow instructions and it is uncommon when citizens do the opposite. On the other hand, he explained how training standards and hiring a more diversely educated patrol force is often key in decreasing the number of civilian complaints against police.

Since I teach courses in both of our majors, Criminal Justice and Community and Justice Studies, I am able to include the necessary tenets of peace and restorative justice to deepen students' analysis and understanding of law enforcement and community voice in these discussions. From my experience, I tell students my perspective consisted of maintaining the theme of not being able to "disturb the peace of the peace officer." Back then, if I or my fellow officers let civilians disturb our peace, those situations usually ended negatively. We were taught to be "keepers of the peace." In most instances, peace keeping worked not only in our favor but that of the civilians as well.

Our students are diverse and include individuals representing traditional age, adult learners, and early college (high school age) students of different racial and ethnic

backgrounds who bring a strong variety of perspectives and analyses. My courses usually begin with an interdisciplinary discussion of structural inequality and a context for looking at law enforcement, community and the criminal justice system then and now. In my community problem-solving course, I bring in speakers who are representatives from public agencies such as Department of Social Services, grassroots and non-profit organizations to highlight the institutional practices and procedures that unintentionally result in economic and racial disparity highlighted in course materials. Students get first-hand knowledge and experience of how these systems work as well as real examples of advocacy efforts occurring in the communities in which they often both live and serve.

Often students who live in communities that are directly affected by these systems in a disparate way are the most vocal, informative, hopeful and resistant. The diversity in the student body helps balance the discussions and learning at Guilford College.

Early in our discussions we talk about historical frameworks for institutional racism and disparity as it exists along racial and class lines. As an African American woman teaching at a predominantly white private liberal arts college in North Carolina, these discussions are typically more challenging for my students and me than they might be for my white colleagues. This challenge is usually reflected in course evaluations or white and/or male students feeling more comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings about discussions of race and class in my courses than with other faculty who are white and male. I usually take those uncomfortable moments as signs of progress and breakthrough. As a result, some of our criminal justice and community and

justice studies courses have over time become not only some of the most challenging but popular classes on campus based on student feedback amongst themselves. Several of our students were encouraged to work toward changing the system by becoming consciousness-raised prosecuting or defense attorneys. A few have gone on to become successful attorneys.

My previous work as a prosecutor and public defender enabled me to gain additional perspectives on the criminal justice system and its relationship to the community. Having practiced and been witness to experiences that amounted to glaring examples of biased practices in policing and prosecuting criminal cases on the one hand, to witnessing extraordinary examples of pure justice, I can understand how criminal justice and sociology studies and scholars conclude that some communities in American cities have been and are now under siege. As Alice Goffman (2014) so aptly describes in *On the Run*, “a new social fabric is emerging under the threat of confinement: one woven in suspicion, distrust, and the paranoiac practices of secrecy, evasion, and unpredictability.”

Now as an Associate Professor of Justice and Policy Studies working with and teaching future and current law enforcement professionals, legislators, activists and leaders, I find the conversations and experiences during my time as a prosecutor are different, but very much the same. The narratives infrequently change when discussing policing in certain communities. Those experiences help me to bring not only interdisciplinary academic perspectives but tried and true uniquely felt references in my class discussions. I often remind students the police are charged with being peacekeepers. I ask them, “what should that look like in everyday practice?” Sometimes

students find it hard to see police as anything other than an occupying force in their communities and neighborhoods throughout the country.

To work toward a vision of police as peacekeeping, as part of their coursework, JPS students and faculty work directly with community groups, organizations and the Greensboro Police Department to address issues facing community members regarding civilian complaints, community policing, youth programs, immigrant and refugee communities. Utilizing independent research projects, participatory action research, internships and volunteer work, students and faculty work closely with community members. The drive for police accountability, prosecutorial accountability as well as community accountability have been the focus for these efforts.

We were able to start the first and only Interim Citizens Police Review Committee in the state of North Carolina of which I serve as Chair. As part our constitutional framework of checks and balances, we have the right to hold the government accountable for their actions to the people. Our students in the JPS programs are aware of this recurring theme and leave equipped with notions of fundamental fairness and enhanced policy analysis skills.

Additionally, as a result of these collaborative efforts in the classroom, Tiffany Kallam, one of our graduates, birthed the idea of taking these courses and education to local prisons. After two years of planning, meetings, research, travelling and visiting prison education programs to places as far as San Quentin, she and others founded Guilford College's Higher Education in Prison Program. We currently offer a five-semester certificate program to inmates in two correctional facilities in North Carolina.

One program is located in Salisbury at a men's medium custody facility and the other is in Troy at a women's medium custody facility.

As the Director, and one of the primary instructors in our program, the experience for me after serving as a former police officer, prosecutor, public defender and now professor has been one of "coming full circle" in the struggle for justice in the field and study of both criminal and community justice. When I recently asked the women inmates in our prison education program, "how does it feel to be newly accepted Guilford College students?" some of their tear-filled responses were "Miss Lawrence, the fact that you drive here every week for us makes me feel like I am worth something; This program makes me feel like I am somebody; I am in "real" college—not some watered down version the community college brings to us; My family told me I wouldn't amount to anything and that I won't even be able to go near a college. Now, I have an enhanced vocabulary. My favorite word now is "empirical" thanks to you and Guilford College; I was a career criminal that landed me in this place. After taking this course and learned so much about the world out there, when I leave here this time, I ain't never coming back." Our program provides evidence of the transformative effect higher education has on individuals that have been written off by society who, because of the coursework, aspire to restore peace, nonviolence, justice and give back to their communities. Each student in our prison initiative speaks to how she or he looks forward to teaching what they have learned.

In conclusion, I look back over my life and remember when I convinced a jury to sentence a 19 year-old African American man to fifteen years to life based on a felony enhancement statute I didn't support. After they sentenced him, I couldn't sleep

comfortably for one week. Two weeks later I was part of an investigative team that helped the grand jury indict several individuals who were defrauding a social service agency by using fake contracts for services they didn't provide in low income communities. From undercover narcotics initiatives, working in the police department's first domestic violence unit to teaching law and sensitivity training in the police academy, restoring peace has been a guiding principle for me. Teaching courses and working at Guilford College allows me to collaborate with folks from the community, courts, cops and corrections while bringing a primary message of "peace" more effectively to solve community problems.

If we continue to represent ourselves through our timeless values of community, diversity, equality, excellence, integrity, justice and stewardship, we are bound to impact the lives of those most in need as well as shine brighter in the world of liberal arts educators.

### **Compassion as a Core Value in Policing**

**James E. Hinson, Jr.:** After serving 24 years with the Greensboro Police Department (GPD) by rising through the ranks to my current position as Deputy Chief, I clearly see and understand the struggles of the community as they relate to their concerns regarding police accountability. Utilizing the framework of my undergraduate education from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (NCA&T) and graduate studies from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) has allowed me to see the world of policing through a broader lens. I encourage all new and seasoned law enforcement officers to attain a liberal arts college education as it has been beneficial to me in my work.

I incorporate the GPD's core values of honesty, integrity, stewardship, respect, trust, and accountability in my work. These values are great, but I always have felt compassion is missing from the list. When policing, compassion must be the centerpiece of how we conduct ourselves on a daily basis when interacting with the community.

There are many references to confirm the importance of compassion in policing; however, I will speak to one example of this embodiment of compassion in my work. A few years ago, as a Captain, I was responsible for the Eastern Division of Greensboro that comprised a population of approximately 70,000 where the crime rate was high. The former police chief (Ken Miller) asked me to address the relevant issues of lack of trust and high crime rates.

I approached these problems by initially attending all of the community meetings in the district which averaged about thirty per month. Sometimes there were two meetings held per day. I let all of the residents in attendance at those meetings know I take their concerns seriously. I learned most felt the police didn't care about their specific concerns which contributed to a lack of trust. One concern was the perception of the community that very high rates of crime existed on the east side of Greensboro, while there were much lower rates of crime commission on the west side of town. I assured residents that I would address each of their concerns and gave everybody in attendance my City cell phone number as a means to have direct contact with me any time of the day. When people called and I responded to their concerns, it broke down the usual barriers of distrust and provided them with feedback in reference to their issue being addressed in a timely manner.

Additional reinforcement was taken when I told the patrol officers that we have to do things differently. We have to break down the barriers of distrust and build partnerships. We need to roll down the windows, get out of the patrol car and interact with the community differently.

Some of the community members felt that while the police seemed to respond differently than in the past to their calls for assistance in addressing crimes of larcenies and burglaries, they did not trust that anything would change in the end. My patrol officers were told they have to let down their defense mechanisms where we can have positive interaction with the community. I told them that if we have to make an arrest, make it in a manner where we respect that person. Treat them with respect and dignity.

As a result of taking these concerns to the officers, they brought in the new approach of interacting with the community in a positive and “thinking outside of the box” manner. They experimented with ideas that were non-traditional to policing and operated with a high sense of compassion. Some of the subsequent events included residential awareness burglary events; free haircut events for youth in the community; partnerships with NCA&T fraternity and sororities that addressed ongoing crime; community fish fry’s to show the GPD’s gratitude for citizens who partnered with us. Other examples included increased foot patrols; partnerships with the Dudley High School Football Team, Page High School ROTC, Buffalo Soldiers and various other community stakeholders that allowed us to address crime in more collaborative ways.

These partnerships, while new and improved, changed attitudes and non-traditional ideas of problem solving and allowed us to successfully reduce crime significantly over a three-year period, build trust and enhance relationships, and create

a better sense of understanding between the community and police. These actions further exhibited our core values along with the addition of compassion.

### **Too Much Power, in Too Few Hands, for Far Too Long**

***Wesley Morris:*** To honor the intrinsic light within others with integrity, a community is responsible to its most marginalized members. As a community organizer with the Beloved Community Center, partnering with Guilford College and the JPS department has been imperative in working toward this goal in our community; my hope is that it happens more often. Anchor institutions of justice-seeking, such as Guilford College, are made better by the shared experience of community organizing offered by groups like Beloved. This kind of partnership informs the academy as much as it pushes forward grassroots initiatives. People in the community who are alone in their struggles come together with students abstracted from their communities, living in a campus bubble. The gift is in the training for students who see themselves as researchers and otherwise may not hear the active voices of the communities. The collaboration adds back into the educational process a key relationship between authors in the community and their narratives, and provides an instructive context for students' future research in a variety of fields.

An issue affecting the lives of marginalized people in Greensboro is that the mechanism for redress of harms caused by the police in our city has thus far been overseen by the police department itself. This arrangement of power constantly produces community problems because citizens lack access to the tools of accountability. This lack of access poses a threat to democracy as systems operate unrestrained by citizens' rights and protection.

The Quaker peace testimony has a built-in philosophy of restorative justice as its ethos. The same belief exists within the Beloved Community Center; human dignity, value and worth deserve protection, and that protection is for both victimizer and victim. To restore the harmed and expose a system of corruption is equally important as setting the conditions for transformation of the whole society. For institutions such as the police department, this means its power of judge and jury must be redistributed to the people.

Laws are not responsible for producing human beings. Culture has more influence in this regard, but laws do impact the way we are in relationship with each other. Police officers are not exempt from culture, in uniform or as civilians. The distinction happens when the uniform, accompanied by a firearm, handcuffs and impunity in court enact the worst parts of the cultural imagination. This imagination has proven that black and brown people, poor people, women and those identifying as LGBTQ are targets of discrimination. Surveys allegedly offering evidence of equity in policing have been raised by police chiefs as solutions. This way of being in community makes the peace far more difficult to achieve. Studies often are used as a way to silence critique. Restorative justice requires mutual respect and engagement. Facilitation of this peace starts at the most basic level of seeing someone different from yourself as yourself.

Such a change in perspective requires long held beliefs and labels like "gang, queer, white, rich" to be interrogated. They are often loaded with forgone conclusions about the value and worth of the person who is fit into that box. Over and over again these labels have been proven too small for any person whom I have met in the work of organizing.

I remember the amount of effort it takes to win even one case of excessive force by police. Two years ago, several young women at Bennett College who were campus leaders, were mistreated by police and falsely accused of resisting arrest (Ginsburg, 2013). The Beloved Community Center organized city council members, ministers, students, faculty, and former college presidents to stand for them. We packed court rooms, organized local meetings at churches, and encouraged community dialogues for the case of one of the students who decided to go to trial. This case was won, but I was struck by the idea that a young woman who was not first in her class, not in college, not graduating and in her local community would be hard pressed to escape such a vicious trap. This is what scares me, that a nation of laws has not protected everyone; it has not even tried because the labels and foregone cultural conclusions do not regard us all as equal.

I imagine part of the difficulty in community and police relations is the inevitable challenges in doing justice when the pressure of policing is also felt by those who choose to be in law enforcement. Navigating the complexity of justice-making as a police officer must be inherently problematic. This fact does not excuse misbehavior or corruption, but it does highlight factors that contribute to the need for intervention and problem solving that require a third party. The peace testimony may help to address this concern in that it offers a way for an officer to suspend her traditional understanding of her authority and open her relationship to others.

When one act of restraint is made, such as the decision by the police to stand down in regards to the arrest and jailing of activists after the grand jury decision not to indict the officer involved in Eric Garner's death, the next day is just as important. The

next day, a bevy of criticisms were laid on the New York City police commanders for their restraint. Persons enjoying a level of privilege and who were majority white condemned the grace offered and questioned why "these people" were not arrested. They did not seem to see the accumulated wounds that were reopened by the grand jury decision and its local manifestations. Part of the power in #blacklivesmatter activism is the relationships it has grown among blacks across state lines as a form of collective mourning and resistance-making.

Students from Greensboro have been the catalyst for change in our nation's laws and ways of governing. The book titled *Civilities and Civil Rights* (Chafe, 1980) is a great resource for understanding the profound impact of student and youth activism. In recent years, the Beloved Community Center, through its partnership with Guilford College, has proven a necessary advocate for many issues of justice in Greensboro. In several cases, community members young and old, including students from historically black educational institutions NCA&T University and Bennett College, have been victimized by local law enforcement and came to Beloved seeking help. The mission of the organization is to stand with people especially as they are struggling. The inner light aspect of the Quaker peace testimony reminds me of the scripture to put our light, our justice and our community on a hill. This is the work of community truth and reconciliation and it is the ongoing work of oppressed people across the world.

Mass incarceration is a ravaging disease that is tearing at our nation. Locally, it shows up in prison reentry rates, lack of opportunities for the formerly incarcerated, broken communities and disrupted families. In confronting this dynamic period of

systemic hostility, our very ways of being are at question. A web of policies and practices hold this destructive system in place.

In my experience, it is imperative to make a distinction between how a policy or practice sounds and how people in neighborhoods experience it. This becomes particularly important when a policy or practice is communicated by the authorities whose actions are questioned, both nationally and locally as law enforcement is now under scrutiny by the nation. The resistance on behalf of law enforcement officials across the nation to enter into community accountability projects has caused more harm than good. It is better to trust that a way is possible than to deny the need for one. It is my belief that the Quaker peace testimony, when shaped and molded by communities in need, will find itself useful and dynamic. Greensboro needs tools for justice making and so does the nation at large. The peace testimony is one such tool.

### **Conclusion**

The opening line of the gospel song, “The Best of Me,” frequently finds its way into lectures and talks by Professor Barbara Lawrence: “He saw the best in me, when everyone else around could only see the worst in me.” Translating from gospel to Quaker idiom, one might say “he saw the light within me, when no one else saw it.” There is a long history in Greensboro of not seeing the light within or the best in people who have been marginalized by the city. When Deputy Chief Hinson decided to let protestors of the Eric Garner decision to be heard rather than to arrest them, he implicitly acknowledged the light within them, almost certainly taking away the occasion for violence. In creating the Interim Citizens Review Board, the Beloved Community Center acknowledged the light within people who feel they have been harmed by

Greensboro police, whose concerns have been rejected or ignored by the city's appeals process.

With these partners, JPS continues the 178-year history of Guilford College's witness to the Quaker peace testimony. Faculty, students, and their partners strive to see the light within each other in a context that works mightily to block this vision. In these struggles resides a trove of learning for students, and through them, hope for change during what the hip-hop band, the Roots, has coined as the "post-hope" era (Chang, 2014, p. 293).

The authors invite other colleges to reach out to community partners to form similar ventures. Students are bearers of cultural change. As Chang and Kobar (2010) has observed, "cultural change is often the dress rehearsal for political change. Or put in another way, political change is the final manifestation of cultural shifts that have already occurred" (para. 4). The more community-based academic programs that foster cultural change among their students, the sooner the country is likely to leave behind this post-hope era for a more just and peace-filled epoch.

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